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THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND ITS
ATTITUDE TO DISEASE:
AN HISTORICAL SURVEY WITH
PRESENT IMPLICATIONS

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Introduction

Illness has long been one of the most common sources of profound human suffering and pain. It is a time of personal misery, of fear about the future, of dependence upon the care of others, and of anguished loneliness and isolation. We intensely dislike being sick, and seek soon to be well. We may even be led to curse God for our affliction, or for someone else's.

Christians have always been particularly exasperated by sickness, since it is hard to see how an almighty God of love can allow those whom He loves to be racked and ravaged by pain. "Why does God let us suffer?" "Why do we not get well when we pray to Him?" "Why did He do this to me?" These questions are constantly asked by sensitive Christians, and very rightly so. We cannot understand why God does not stop the pain of those whom we love (and whom He loves also-- even more than we do). "Why does sickness happen in the first place?" we ask, and no answer seems quite adequate. It is easy to affirm pat answers when we are not in the midst of suffering, but things are different when serious illness comes. Then the bottom falls out, and life loses hope. What have we to say as Christians here? What can we do?

These questions are too profound for any simple answer, and I do not here presume to give one. The goal of this thesis is to try to see what the Christian Church has done to deal with these questions over the centuries of its existence.

We want to find out what tools are at our disposal as Christians by which we can reckon with the problem of illness and pain. We hope better to come to a Christian understanding of the struggles involved. We do not seek any easy answers; we do intend to watch Christians grapple with the problem over the centuries, and try to perceive where the difficulties lie. We will try to focus on the problem of sickness to see what the Christian Church has done about it in the past, and what it can still do now.

The profundity of the problem of pain due to disease, as well as its attendant "spiritual" problems such as loneliness or bitterness, can be readily seen by the fact that the Church has dealt with it in various ways over the centuries. From a clear assertion of the fact that disease is evil, and that in Jesus Christ God ultimately has conquered evil, the Church moved more and more to a recognition that disease is here to stay; at least, it could not be sure when God will act to throw out disease and bring in His Kingdom. With this recognition came a change in the Church's dispensing of sacramental grace, for Unction lost its original healing purpose to become instead a final absolution of sins. Also, the Church came to see that God's love is not absent when we are sick, and that a person can use his illness as a chance to grow closer to God's love. God heals the person even if He may not heal his physical infirmity.

Perhaps the greatest change of all in the Church's view on disease came with the rise of medical science. No longer

did God heal men's bodies directly through the Church, for now healing was accomplished by physicians. Consequently, for the last two centuries the Church has had to consider where God means her work to be in regard to disease-- since certainly Christian love of our fellows requires us to do all that we can to bring hope to our afflicted brethren. The Church is still engaged in re-interpreting its role in the healing of the diseased person.

We will conduct our study of the Church's ministry to disease over the centuries in the following way. We will first consider Scripture, in order to see Christ's attitude towards disease; without knowledge of God's revelation in Christ, we cannot begin to consider the implications of the Christian hope in respect to illness. Then we will divide twenty centuries into four chapters: the Patristic era (the early Church); the medieval- Reformation era; the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; and our present situation. Needless to say, there are great gaps in this time scheme, but such gaps are inevitable when we try artificially to divide history into neat periods. I did not intend to adhere closely to this time scheme when it seemed proper to go on and treat a later development in relation to what had gone before. In other words, my purpose here is to gain an overall perspective on trends and changes, rather than devise a neat chronology. He who wishes a neat system of dates must look elsewhere. We seek an understanding of the changes of the flowing of the

great currents in the Church's outlook on disease; how well we achieve it is for the reader to judge.

A final word of warning is in order. I have often felt that as my work has focused on the unique Christian hope, it has minimized the terrible suffering which is so real to those who are sick, as well as to their loved ones. This circumstance may be inevitable when we consider the reality of the Christian hope. Suffice it to say that I am sure that the suffering is better known to us than is the hope, and that it is our purpose to see how the hope has inspired Christian ministry to suffering. The suffering is always an underlying assumption.

While there are no easy answers to be found here, we hope to discover the resources which we can use as Christians in the struggle with disease. We want to understand our present ministry to the sick; to do so, we will look at the historical ministry of the Church in this area. If this study helps us as Christians better to serve the sick, then it will have achieved its purpose. Only with God's help can it do so.

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CHAPTER I

Scriptural Foundation

Before we embark on our journey through the Church's history to see what it thought and did about disease, we will have to start by considering the attitude of Christ himself. The entire "raison d'être" of the Christian Church is the joy of God's revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ, and we properly may refuse to label "Christian" any view not accountable to this revelation. We wish to clarify in our minds Christ's dealings with disease, and then to see how well the Church has followed his way.

The Christian repository of Christ's teaching and action is Holy Scripture. Here Christians have preserved Jesus' healing and exorcisms, and we can find a picture of how he went about healing the sick, how he accounted for their sickness, and what he taught about the future. In St. Paul's epistles appears the apostolic attitude toward disease during the earliest formative years of the Church. It is clear that we cannot discover the unique Christian hope of victory over disease and evil without starting our study in Scripture.

The New Testament contains many more references to Christ's dealing with disease than we have time to consider here. This preservation of many of Christ's cures shows the importance of the battle with disease to Christ and his early followers. Sickness and its suffering are not dodged by the

Gospel. Our study will seek generalizations that are well grounded in Scripture. We cannot consider every healing performed by Christ, but we do wish to discover why he did them. With this understanding in mind, we proceed.

The Jewish Old Testament background in which Jesus lived and worked in Palestine was generally clear regarding its attitude toward disease. In spite of the diversity of the Old Testament, we may safely generalize that its writers believed that disease is sent by God as punishment for transgression of the Covenant or as an expression of His wrath.¹ Disease was God's retribution for human sin; it was simply chastisement, not God's desire to make men better by putting them to the test. When someone was ill, he obviously had sinned.² We get sick because God chooses to make us suffer for our failure to keep His Law. In this same line of thought, the Old Testament also holds that other people's jealousy and one's own self-indulgence can cause disease.³ Only in one case do we find disease caused by Satan (Job 2:7), but even then he acted only with God's permission.

This view persisted on into Jesus' time, and, indeed, it has not even died yet. This outlook saw God as responsible for every event in human history. Disease is punishment from God for our sin. This explanation is simple, but it is not the Christian one; Jesus Christ saw things differently.

Indeed, Christ completely reversed this view, and he did it so much to the incredulity of his listeners that they could not understand it. Jesus denied that suffering from

disease is the will of God. He said that illness is opposed to God's love, and thus that it is the work of Satan. God does not send sickness as punishment for our waywardness; on the contrary, He will release our bodies from suffering. Illness intrudes from outside of God's will; it is alien to God's original purpose. Men are victimized by a force which is an enemy to God's love and its purpose of regenerating the whole man.⁴ What makes men suffer is evil; it is not from God. God does not punish us for our sins. Jesus calls it the "bondage of Satan." God is opposed to man's suffering in death, disease, and infirmity. By his healings, Jesus clearly demonstrated that sickness is not from God, and that God fights it. Disease is real and strong, but God's power to overcome it is even greater. We shall see shortly how Christians saw that Christ's victory had overcome the power of disease.

This assertion by the Gospel writers says that disease is not from God. They believed that its source was Satan and his demonic hosts. Disease came from an evil source which, much against man's wishes, possesses and afflicts him. People at Jesus' time frequently held the apocalyptic view of the world, and saw the world as subjected to Satan. Demon possession and other infirmities were seen as examples of the power of Satan to enslave human beings.⁵ Disease was from forces opposed to God's love.

Certain diseases were clear examples of a man's being possessed by demons. Mental affliction and epilepsy were seen

as definitely demonic in origin. This perspective discovered that in such ailments the whole personality of a man was deformed; that is, disease is more than physical incapacity, and to get rid of its effects requires a cure of the soul as well as the body. Man's spirit is afflicted as much as is his body. Disease disables the whole person. Such incapacity cannot come from God's love.

This power that possesses men is the evil Satan in the eyes of the Gospels. Yet the presence of this force opposed to God does not result in an ultimate dualism in the universe, since God is much stronger than evil. God is victorious over this power of evil which makes men suffer. Jesus gave clear examples of this victory by his exorcisms of the devils possessing men. No demon can continue to ravage a person when that person meets Christ. In spite of their protestation, demons were powerless against the love of God for man. No bodily ailment could stand against Christ.

The Gospels show clearly that Christ saw that exorcism was a very important part of his ministry. His task was to bring God's victory over evil. Jesus saw his exorcism of demons afflicting men as putting an end to the reign of Satan. He saw his ministry as beginning an attack on the powers of evil, which would end in the complete overthrow of Satan.⁶ Jesus' exorcisms were evidence of the nearness of the Kingdom of God, where afflictions are powerless. Jesus saw his ministry as ending with the apocalyptic final overthrow of evil, and in his exorcisms and healings are the first signs of

this victory.

St. Paul's epistles develop further the implications of Christ's victory over evil and suffering. The power of evil in this world cannot stand against Christ. In I Corinthians 3:16-17 Paul says that since God made us, we are holy, and His Spirit dwells in us; whatever destroys us will itself be destroyed by God. Romans 8:18-25 may be summarized as saying that while the sufferings of this present time are great, they are nothing compared to the future glory of God. He says that "creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the Children of God."⁷ All the world has been subjected to the powers of evil, but soon sin will be overcome and wrested from its hold on our bodies. The famous passage on Christ's victory over death (I Corinthians 15) says the same good news. "Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet."⁸ Christ will destroy even death; God's love can never be severed from us. Disease will be overcome completely, and it is partially conquered already. Christ's Spirit already is in baptized Christians. Perhaps it is presumptuous to assume that these three passages are sufficient testimony to the evidence of Christ's victory in all of Paul's work, but we will have to be content with what we have seen above. Paul is absolutely sure that Christ has conquered the powers which have been causing disease. The Kingdom of God is on the way.

The Gospels are certain that disease is one of Satan's favorite weapons in his fight against God. O. A. Piper says that the Christian Scriptures see that Satan uses the suffering of our flesh to tempt us, to try to destroy our desire for new life in Christ, either by causing us to shrink from the pain or by leading us to rely on our own abilities to withstand it.⁹ Illness is meant to lead us away from openness to God's love. The Gospels show that Jesus was able to heal only those who came to him and asked to be healed; he healed people who realized their inability to get rid of their incapacity and who thus opened themselves to his healing love. We are not to rebel against God who did not send ~~us~~, but are to endure our ailments patiently, confident of God's desire and power to heal us. Illness can lead us towards Christ rather than away from him if it causes us to reduce our trust in ourselves.

The epistles point out that as followers of Christ we are involved in his battle against evil. With Christ we wrestle against "principalities, powers, world rulers of this darkness, spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:12). Christ is the victor in this wrestling.¹⁰ We who are baptized into Christ share in his power over devils, by the grace of his Spirit dwelling in us. As we will shortly see, the Scriptures contain instances where Christ's apostles were themselves able to exorcise. Christians are not defenseless against malicious disease; we partake in the greatest power in the universe--God's love.

This view of the New Testament is the greatest news ever known. God in Jesus Christ has overcome evil and Satan. Suffering continues in the world, but its hold on Christians has been broken. Satan is still active, say the Scriptures, but his doings are doomed and God's kingdom is near.¹¹ God's love is the strongest force in the world, and He wills the redemption of our bodies as well as of our souls. We are absolutely sure of the victory of God's love. In Christ's death and Resurrection, God chose to subject Himself to the power of evil and suffering, and He overcame it. Disease presently is still continuing, but its time is short and soon God will end its power completely. Christ's healings are the beginning of this victory over disease.

It is important to notice the radical nature of this assertion of the Gospel. Hebrews at Jesus' time felt that disease was caused by individual sin, in accord with the later Old Testament view. In the surrounding pagan world, gods were interested only in the healthy.¹² Christianity said that God is a Healer and a Pardoner who saves men from evil. We can readily see why people found the Christian good news incredible; it was unlike anything they had ever known. God heals, not chastizes. God is opposed to disease, and wills to see men whole. There is a positive hope here which is greater than any other, almost too good to be true.

While both Jesus' work and teaching preserved in the Gospels and his apostles' reflections in the epistles agree that God has conquered sickness and suffering, at no point do

they say that evil already is powerless. The ravages of sickness still went on even in Gospel times. The complete victory over evil is to be a future one. Christians do still have to reckon with suffering and disease; being baptized into Christ does not exempt one from sharing in suffering. Indeed, when the Christian (in St. Paul's imagery) dies in baptism to the old world with its power of sin, he is born into Christ and his suffering and victory. Dying to the world means sharing in the suffering which is caused by Satan's tyranny.¹³ It means voluntary acceptance of all the evil which God's enemies may work. It requires patience to endure the burden of the world's alienation from God; the simple fact that illness exists shows that the world is alienated from God's love. Yet as the Christian suffers, he is sure of Christ's final triumph over all the powers of evil, because he experiences in his own life that victory which was in Christ's Resurrection. The evils of the world may abuse him but they can never crush him, and thus the believer may accept all with patience. Whatever he may lose in this life is nothing compared to what he will receive with Christ.¹⁴ Suffering can be borne, with God's help, until it is completely overcome. God's love already is stronger than suffering; Satan is on his last legs. Suffering is only temporary until God's Kingdom fully comes. We have a joy which transcends any suffering we may have. The Scriptural hope on disease is eschatological.

The New Testament proclaims that God's love has acted to overcome human suffering, and that soon His victory will be

complete; yet it also says that God fully understands and shares in sickness and suffering. Scripture is not so bent on pointing to God's sure and future victory that it ignores the painful realities of life. We cannot accuse the Gospel of being other-worldly to the extreme. The New Testament takes evil seriously; it is marked by a sense of awe for the terribleness of the evils of this world. As Piper points out, there is no view in the Christian Scriptures that good ever arises out of evil; goodness always asserts itself in spite of evil.¹⁵ Although evil is inferior to God, it is real in this world.

The supreme instance of the power of evil and its ensuing suffering is the Crucifixion of Christ. Here Jesus himself entered fully into the reality of human pain. Jesus taught that "the Son of Man must suffer," as in Matthew 17:22-23. In the world love must suffer, as Christ himself came to see. It was his Father's will that Christ suffer and be crucified. The power of evil in this world is such that even God's love must suffer. Yet, as St. Paul makes clear, Jesus' suffering rescues us from bondage to evil; Romans 5: 1-11 shows that while we were helpless against evil, Christ's death has brought us "the hope of sharing in the glory of God." By his suffering did Christ conquer suffering and evil.

Jesus' suffering and death on the Cross were followed by his Resurrection, where God demonstrated His victory over evil and suffering and death. As a result, while we notice that God understands and shares in human pain (as He did in

Christ), this sharing in pain is overshadowed by His victory over it. Christ's suffering brought Christians new meaning in pain,¹⁶ but that meaning is by no means ultimate. Disease cannot overcome God's love for the person who is sick.

According to the tradition preserved in the New Testament, Jesus did not teach his disciples that life was going to be all comfort and ease after he died. Quite the contrary was true. The righteous will not have comfort and ease. Jesus demanded that his followers be willing to make any sacrifice for his sake -- even life itself;¹⁷ while life is a wonderful gift from God, it is not as glorious as is His eternal love for man. Suffering is more intense and baffling in the New Testament than in the Old because in the former it does not come from God, and the Christian is urged to have compassion for the sufferings of others, whereas in the Old Testament the sufferer is involved in his own misery.¹⁸ Those who suffer can trust in God and need not worry about the ravages of their disease. The Christian disciple in this world must be prepared to be afflicted and suffer.

Christ's suffering and death means one more thing in the New Testament. When Christians are sick or suffer, they do not do so alone, for Christ suffers with them. Christ is present with those of his flock who are enduring pain, because his human nature is all-inclusive and pervasive.¹⁹ When Christians suffer for Christ's sake, they may be sure that he is especially present with them. Sickness and pain are hard to bear by ourselves, and Christ is there with us to strengthen

and sustain us, and keep us close to God's love. This idea grew particularly in the late epistles of the New Testament, such as I Peter, where Christians were suffering much pain from persecution; even here the writer assures the Christians that their pain comes from battle with evil, and that Christ will care for them. Christ suffers when Christians suffer.

The New Testament thus observes the intense reality of suffering and sickness. It does not give any final answer to the problem of why sickness exists, and why the righteous suffer. It does say that sickness does not come from God, and that sickness opposes God's purpose of redemption of the body as well as the soul. Yet we cannot always reach this conclusion in the New Testament; for example, in II Corinthians 12, St. Paul asks God to remove the "thorn in his flesh." God refuses to do so, saying, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Here God feels that Paul's incapacity will keep him humble and for that reason it is desirable. While God does not cause sickness, He may well allow it if it will help our faith to grow. There is no glib and easy answer to the cause of sickness. The certainty in the New Testament lies in the fact that we will receive in the Kingdom of God ample reward for our sufferings. We shall see how as time went by, the Church lost sight of much of God's victory over sickness here and now and focused instead on the after life.

We may conclude that Christ had a two-part attitude towards disease in his own time. First of all, he saw disease as part of the evil in the world against which he was fighting,

and that this evil could not prevail against the love of God. Secondly, he knew that God comforts and strengthens those who follow His way who are presently afflicted; Christians do not suffer alone or in hopeless silence.

Christ did more than mere proclamation of the future elimination of disease and the comfort of those who suffer now. He actually did something to get rid of disease in the present; he actually inaugurated God's victory over disease. Jesus healed sickness; he did more than strengthen the people whom he met--he cured them. The Gospels contain forty-one instances where Christ healed an infirmity. Of these, thirty-seven are physical ailments, including three occasions when Christ healed large numbers of people. These stories of healing are frequent in the Gospels, and we may be sure that they were an integral part of the tradition about Jesus' ministry. Unfortunately we do not have the time to pursue some of these healing narratives at any depth, and we will have to be satisfied with generalizations. Jesus healed to bring in the Kingdom of God. According to Matthew 8:14, healing was one of the indications of the Messiah; he would free men from their burden.

The evangelists felt that the ministry of healing was very important. They saw it both as a sign of Christ's power and as part of God's redemption of the world.²⁰ Salvation in the New Testament always meant wholeness and health of both body and soul in this life as well as after death. Against the power of God's love no disease could stand, and consequently we find

no evidence that Christ saw any disease as incurable. Disease had to fall at the hands of God's onslaught against evil. Christ's healings were the beginning of this battle. The New Testament writers, then, saw Jesus' healing of disease as more than a compassionate helping of one in distress; healing was fundamental to man's salvation.

The Gospels make it clear, however, that Jesus' healings were not haphazard. He healed only those who first made the response of faith and repentance. Jesus often received a profession of faith from the afflicted who was to be healed. Some passages will help to clarify this statement. In Matthew Chapter 8 we find several instances of healing which would lead us to the conclusion that faith in God's power to heal was necessary to be healed. In verse 2, the leper says "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." Jesus does so. The faith of the centurion in verses 8ff. surely sees Jesus as the Son of God, who has the power to heal. In 9:21 we find that the woman's faith heals her hemorrhage. In 9:27 the blind men recognize Jesus as the Messiah, the "Son of David." An interesting case appears in 15:22ff., where a foreign woman's faith in Jesus heals her daughter instantly.

Faith in God's healing power was also required of the healer as well as of the afflicted. In Matthew 17:19-20, Jesus tells his disciples that they had been unable to exorcise a demon because of their little faith. Healing required a full commitment to God's power to heal. This aspect of healing will pop up again in later Church history; because of the

intense trusting in and thrusting upon God's love which is required, the demands in time became difficult to meet and as a result the Church's power to heal declined. Yet healing was basic to the work of the apostles, as we can readily see in the Book of Acts.

Healing also indicated Jesus' power to forgive sins. While Jesus did not see sickness as caused by one's own personal breach of the Covenant (as we have seen), most of his contemporaries did. Thus a healing of disease would show them a forgiveness of sins. It is very likely that we may regard the healing in Matthew 9:1ff. as true rather than a later accommodation of Christianity to Jewish practice. Here Jesus cures the paralytic by saying, "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven." The Jews felt that Jesus was blaspheming, but his cure of the disease proved them wrong. God forgives sins, and the healing of disease is one sign of God's forgiving love. Jesus' teaching contradicts the Jewish view that God sends disease as punishment for our sins; God neither makes us sick nor punishes us for our sins.²¹ We will see that the Middle Ages revived this view that disease is given by God as punishment or trial of our faith, but such teaching is not warranted by Scripture.²²

If we consider Jesus' methods of healing we find that he used various methods. Prayer Book Studies III points out that he used several.²³ He often used material media, such as where he anointed the blind man's eyes with clay (John 9:6). He sometimes used the laying on of hands, such as in Luke

13:13 on the woman with an infirmity. Usually his spoken word was sufficient, especially in mental cases. There is no record of Jesus' using oil, but his apostles did, and since it was a common Jewish practice, he may have used it too.

Thus it is clear that Jesus saw the actual healing of disease right here and now as a basic concern of his ministry; he was to do more than proclaim the future victory over disease. Curing sickness demonstrated his battle with and defeat of sin. It also showed his compassionate love and forgiveness of sins. We can see that its intention was to bolster faith in God's healing and redeeming love--a love that saves the whole man, both soul and body. These healings consequently were not magic; they required faith on the part of both healer and afflicted. The love of God does have the power to remove emotional and physical disease. Christ sought faith before he could heal, for such faith gave the certainty that Christ would heal.

The New Testament clearly affirms Jesus' power and desire to heal. His compassion led him to liberate man from the bondage to disease and suffering. As Vincent Taylor says, Jesus' miracles are "works of compassion and power."²⁴ In order to supplement his own ministry in this area, he sent out his disciples to preach and to heal the sick. In Luke we find Jesus sending out seventy to work in this ministry (Luke 10:9); Luke, as a physician, was surely particularly impressed with Jesus' responsibility for healing. Curing sickness was fundamental to the Kingdom of God. As Jesus commissioned his

disciples to heal, so was that authority passed on in the Church, and we may be sure that it is still part of our function as the Body of Christ.

The New Testament is not as far from the perspective of modern medicine as we might think. R. K. Harrison suggests that St. Paul implies a connection between a specific emotional state and the operation of particular physical organs.²⁵ While this point seems forced, it does point to the fact that the health of the body and the health of the soul are interdependent. The New Testament is not primitive nor opposed to modern medical methods. Physical illness is a reality with which we can deal.

Christians rejected the dualism of the Greek philosophy in the world where they lived and worked. The Incarnation of Christ showed the firm union of spirit and body.²⁶ Christ's human body attests to the beauty of humanity. Even though a Christian's body might prove itself to be weak, it nonetheless is the gift of God to him. The body is in the image of God and cannot itself be evil. Christian Scripture affirms the goodness and reality of the body, as does medicine. Both camps work to make it well.

We have completed our general survey of the New Testament to discover its insights and hopes about the problem of human illness. We have seen that it accepts the strong reality of disease, but even stronger is the healing power of God's love. It proclaims God's imminent victory over evil, including disease, since disease does not come from God. Its hope is

absolutely confident, and is surely the greatest that man has ever known. Healing disease is not a byproduct but rather an imperative of God's redemptive love.

We will now consider how well the Church has held to the work of Christ against disease. We will find some changes and some losses, but always somewhere a glimmer of that hope remains which is Christ's alone to give.

CHAPTER II

The Patristic Church

The Christian Church in its first five centuries is the next aspect of this study, since it was during this period that the theology and customs of a developing institutional body came into being. In order to perceive the attitude of the Church to disease and its consequent suffering, we must consider the path which the Church followed under its Founding Fathers as it confronted new cultures and new problems in the variegated world of the first centuries A.D. Most scholars say that during this time the Church as an institution gradually evolved out of the disorganized followers of Christ. It is well to consider what the Church in its earliest years thought about disease, and also what tools it saw that it had to deal with the problem.

There is no question that the Church continued to carry on Jesus' ministry to the sick. Curing sickness was such a central aspect of Jesus' work that all cases of sickness were from the start the concern of the Church which continued His work. Thus we find that the earliest Christians were deeply motivated by the same compassion and concern for suffering in God's world that were embodied in Jesus himself. In addition, the Church was able to do more than simply be concerned about suffering due to illness, for it saw itself as retaining Christ's miraculous power actually to heal disease. The Book of Acts is the clear Biblical source of healings performed by

the brethren in the name of Christ. The Early Fathers definitely felt that the power of Christ in the Church could heal and exorcise demons.¹ Christians have a power which no one else in the world has, as Irenaeus showed when he pointed out that heretics are unable to heal.² Origen saw Christ as the greatest power for healing now; Christ is the only complete source of healing. Even as late as the fourth century, Chrysostom saw healing as a common occurrence in the Church, and he noticed that the afflicted were often getting rid of diseases by anointing themselves with oil taken from sanctuary lamps in Church buildings. This last element indicates the beginning of a practice of healing which has continued in the Church to the present--anointing, which will be considered later. What is important to notice here is that the Church considered healing of disease to be fundamental to its ministry to the world, and that the Fathers were actually able to heal by the power of Christ. The Church saw itself as victorious over disease through Christ.

Yet the Church was heir to Christ's Passion as well as to His Victory. The Church suffered intensely in its earliest centuries, with physical pain and death caused by persecution as well as disease. The Church accepted this suffering as part of the Passion of Christ. It saw that the sinfulness of all men meant that suffering was the inescapable fate of all people in a sinful age. Love includes suffering. But suffering now had more meaning than simply God's punishing wrath, as often in the Old Testament; suffering united the

Church with Christ himself. As St. Paul showed, believers who accept suffering serve Christ's cause and are united with him, and they continue his suffering for mankind, for the Church is now, in a sense, his physical Body.³ Thus, while to the earliest Fathers Christianity was joyful and triumphant, it never denied the reality of disease. The Way of the Cross was not an other-worldly escape from suffering but rather an affirmation of healing through suffering.⁴ Suffering is part of the Work of Christ. As Cyprian put it: there is "glory in suffering... wherein Christ Himself is engaged...Whose strength is the strength by which we resist."⁵ The Church then suffered as it shared in Christ's battle against the evil powers of this world. Suffering was part of the Christian life, part of our conflict with sin. As Christ could not escape it, neither can we, for love is victorious in the end.

The Church saw disease as the consequence of man's sin, his state of being cut off from God. Sin interferes with man's communion with God. From God comes the flow of life which is necessary for the health of both soul and body; when sin cuts off this flow, men lose the close relationship with God which sustains their health in the troubles of this world.⁶ The early Fathers reflected this view in various ways, for they saw disease as the result of deliberate human turning away from God. Theophilus of Antioch saw pain as coming from man's disobedience of God.⁷ Tertullian showed how death was not given to man by God, for it came from man's own choice. God does not inflict it on man as punishment, since "the Lord gradually prepared the means of

healing--all the rules of faith, they also bearing a resemblance to the causes of the ailment, ~~seeing~~ they annul the word of death by the word of life." Here it is clear that illness is not punishment, but rather it is our removing ourselves from God's power. Origen, steeped in the Christian hope, anticipates that God will finally act to overcome this suffering here. Thus, illness comes when God is not present; illness is not caused by the love of God. God's love displaces disease.

Being baptized into the Church did not stop Christians from getting sick. Hence it was clear to the Fathers that Christians could still sin after baptism; they still could (and did) turn their backs on God's grace. However, the new relationship of being baptized into Christ did afford the believer new strength to live in righteousness. By the middle of the second century, this problem of post-baptismal sin arose in Rome and elsewhere. Clebsch and Jaekle show that the Shepherd of Hermas (a second century Christian text) considers God's attitude to sin after baptism, and concludes that the avenue to reconciliation is still open, if the believer sincerely repents of his sins.⁸ Thus the baptized Christian could be sure that in baptism he has been given a new relationship with God, and even as his sin prevents the full healing power of this relationship from helping his body, he can be certain that the full healing relationship with God can be established even in this life. The Christian looked forward to this complete victory of God over sin and disease

in God's future establishment of His Kingdom, the coming glory of God at the parousia. God's victory for the baptized was unquestionable.

This idea of the parousia was the core of most of the theology in the early Christian Church, and it had a marked effect on its outlook on disease. The Church expected God's imminent judgment so soon that it did not feel the need to deal with evil or suffering as a theological problem.⁹ God's victory over evil will come soon, and Christians have to bear their sufferings only for a short interim. God's Kingdom is not yet completely here, as is evidenced by the power of disease; yet the Kingdom is soon to come, and then disease will be eliminated--at least for those who follow Christ. God will very soon rule completely. This attitude of future hope and of the shortness of present sufferings caused the Church to bide its time. Personal problems were seen as circumstances to be endured only until the parousia vindicated the hope of the faithful.¹⁰ The Church counseled patience. As we have seen, healings did go on, but they were valued as signs that some of the power of Christ was already present, rather than as intentions to help the sick. Christians sought to sustain each other until the coming end, and baptism was seen as enabling them to do so. Suffering now (from disease or otherwise) will very shortly be amply rewarded. Thus the focus was on the future vindication of suffering rather than ministering to the present suffering--on God's future elimination of disease rather than its present cure.

As time went on and the parousia failed to come, the Church found itself compelled by circumstances to turn its gaze from the apocalypse to the life in which it was already living. The Church still was sure that God would act decisively to bring in His Kingdom and put an end to the earthly sufferings of Christians, but as the span of time lengthened and the Kingdom had not yet come, the burden of illness grew harder to bear until the eschaton. This situation, then, caused a change of focus from a largely futuristic hope to a concern for the present as well as the future. Until God acts, the Church must deal with the situation of this life, including disease. Thus did practices for the actual healing of disease begin to develop in the Church. Clebsch and Jaekle suggest that another reason for this shift in focus was that after the expectation of the eschaton had faded, the Church discovered itself in strong enmity with the dominant Roman culture and its religion, and Christians began to think about the problems of people and how to incorporate these problems into the Christian Gospel.¹¹ Cure of disease was a major concern here.

Healing disease understandably became very important for the Church in its first three centuries as the fading of the parousia caused the Church to focus more on its Christ-given power to heal infirmities. The Apostles continued healing as a normal part of their ministry, since Jesus had commissioned them to do so (Luke 9:2). That the Apostles did share in Jesus' power to heal is shown by evidence in the New Testament,

where there are thirty-two instances of Apostolic healing.¹² Nineteen of these are found in the Book of Acts. This healing was required less out of compassion than by the fact that the Apostles were Christ's heirs in the battle against evil. Healing was as important as the Word and Sacraments.¹³

By the time that the Epistle of St. James was written (125-150 A.D.), methods for the practice of healing were beginning to grow up in the Church. The Church had begun to devise ritual to deal with its healing ministry. Dawson finds in this epistle that a certain procedure was followed by the primitive Church in healing disease.¹⁴ (1) Sickness was seen as primarily physical, and not just as a spiritual problem; it really did plague the body, and was not just imagination.¹⁵ (2) When a Christian became sick, he was bidden to call the elders of the Church. The Church was the first healing resource, through Christ, much as we today would call a doctor. (3) To the elders the patient made a confession of sin, since he must have no obstacles in his healing relationship with God. (4) The elders then declared God's forgiveness of the patient's sins, to show God's desire to cure him of his illness. (5) The patient then was assumed to be in faith, was anointed, and prayer was made for his recovery. James 5:14 is the classic Scriptural basis for Holy Unction, but since we will deal with Unction a bit later, we will not explore this practice as yet. It is very likely that laying on of hands was used here also as a part of the healing practice of the Church.¹⁶ (6) The prayers of the faithful were certain

to cause God to restore the patient to full health of mind, body, and spirit. Thus it is clear that healing was not seen as an occasional miracle, but rather as a regular practice given to the Church by Christ. Christians were absolutely sure that God would heal them, the Body of Christ.

Another indication of the importance to the primitive Church of the healing of disease was its connection with the office of the bishop. These overseers of the Church became the source of all spiritual and healing authority in the Church.¹⁷ All presbyters and exorcists received their commissions from the bishop, and he was responsible for all the work which he delegated to them. Weatherhead says that some of these bishops were actually physicians, thus being interested in the process of healing.¹⁸ Bishops had a pastoral interest in sick members of their flock, and with presbyters they went and visited in the homes of the sick. Dawson says that on these visits they made no pretense of giving ordinary medical treatment, although they blessed medicine, bread, wine, water, oil, and the person's diet.¹⁹ This separation from ordinary medicine seems likely, since medicine at that time was commonly quite superstitious, while the Church healed by the assurance of God's grace. These house visits also involved a religious service consisting of confession and absolution, sprinkling with holy water as a sign that God purifies the physical, solemn Unction, and a prayer for healing. Again we meet the practice of Unction; part of the bishop's function was to bless the healing "oil of the sick" which sacramentally

conveyed Christ's healing power. As the membership of the Church increased, the bishops had more to do and consequently were unable to make house visits. As a result, the sick were brought to the Church services. Every Sunday at the Eucharist the bishop blessed and prayed for them, and often laid his hands upon them.²⁰ The bishop thus came to embody the power of the Church for healing, both pastorally and liturgically.

The concern of the Church for the sick was undaunted even when its prayers for healing seemed to have no effect. When there were cases which did not respond to the Church's faith in God's healing power, then the compassion of the brethren led them to take tender care of the person with the infirmity. Dawson says that "one of the great glories of Christianity down the ages has been its regard for the sick and suffering."²¹ In order to tend these people, hospitals and infirmaries were founded. Christians felt that it was their duty to set up means to care for the sick, since the Gospel was good news for the downcast and sick, and Jesus always responded compassionately. The basic motive underlying the foundation of Christian hospitals was love, a love which caused each Christian community to look after the sick, poor, orphans, infirm, and widows at its own expense.²² The Gospel cares for those who are disabled and diseased.

By the time that Christianity became a state religion, a hospital system under the supervision of each local bishop had been created. Deacons and deaconesses went to tend the sick in their own homes. Institutions for travellers, the poor,

orphans, foundlings, and for the sick (this last-named institution was called *νοσοκομεία*) were organized in order that the unfortunates in Christian communities receive tender care. Basil of Caesarea (one of the famous Cappadocian Fathers) built a huge hospital in the year 369 and Gregory of Nazianzus (another Cappadocian) spoke well of its usefulness and told about its treatment of leprosy. As the monastic system grew, it also provided infirmaries for the care of sick monks and others. Thus we see clearly that Christianity from the start had a strong concern to mitigate the sufferings of the sick, and that it did so by tender loving care as well as by God's healing power; that is, Christians did not sit back and let God do all the work of healing, but rather they gave their nursing care through which God would help to heal. Christians acted to care for those who were sick.

We now turn our attention to the area that has surely been the most important and the most unique contribution of Christianity to the victory over disease - the Sacraments. Sacraments have traditionally been vital to Christianity because they are visible vehicles of God's grace to us, and were set up or used by Christ himself. Sickness is a time when a person feels particularly helpless and lonely, and thus he is strengthened by a sacramental experience of God's love and healing power. Sacraments have been at the core of Christian healing ever since Christ himself. As the Church grew, Sacraments became progressively more important in every aspect of Christian life, including God's victory over disease.

Baptism became important because it was the Sacrament of initiation into Christ's fellowship, and as such it changed the life of each Christian forever. In it the Christian gains a new close relationship with God through the Holy Spirit. God dwells in the whole person, body as well as soul. Baptism overcomes a person's bondage to sin and evil by joining him to Christ. Thus, it was very clear to the early Fathers that after Baptism, body and soul are closely related. The body as well as the soul shares the victory of the risen Christ over sin and death, sustained in this life by the other Sacraments.²³ Baptism makes our physical body, or "flesh," the Temple of the Holy Spirit, and thus is wholly good and beautiful. Whatever works for its destruction is clearly opposed to the will of the Creator.

Never did the Fathers at all think that the soul was brought closer to God in Baptism than was the body. This view perverts the Fathers' awareness of God's full takeover in Baptism; his grace extends to the weakness of the body as well as to that of the soul. Since the Fall meant that both body and soul die, the restoration of Baptism does not restore just the latter and leave the former to suffer, because this restoration would then be incomplete, and would suggest that Christ's victory over evil was only partial. A few quotations from the Fathers will show how strongly they asserted that Christ's victory extends to the body as well as the soul in Baptism.

Justin Martyr, On the Resurrection:

As in the case of a yoke of oxen, if one or other is loosed from the yoke, neither of them can plow alone; so neither can soul nor body alone effect anything, if they be unyoked from their communion....God has called man to life and resurrection, He has called not a part, but the whole, which is the soul and the body. Since would it not be unquestionably absurd if, whilst these two are in the same being and according to the same law, the one were saved and the other not?²⁴

Clement of Alexandria, The Paedagogos:

The good Instructor, the Wisdom, the Word of the Father, Who made man, cares for the whole of His creature; the all-sufficient Physician of humanity, the Saviour, heals both body and soul.²⁵

Cyprian, Epistle:

The obstinate wickedness of the devil prevails even up to the saving water, but in Baptism it loses all the poison of his wickedness. When they come to the water of salvation and to the sanctification of Baptism, we ought to know and to trust that there the devil is beaten down, and the man, dedicated to God, is set free by the divine mercy..., the wicked spirits cannot remain any longer in the body of a man in whom, baptized and sanctified, the Holy Spirit is beginning to dwell....those who are baptized by urgent necessity in sickness, and obtain grace, are free from the unclean spirit wherewith they were previously moved....²⁶

It is clear that the Fathers saw that the grace of God in Baptism strengthens our bodies as well as our souls. This grace is so strong that the Christian fears neither sickness nor death, for even there God is present.

Baptism incorporates the individual Christian's body into that of Christ. The Fathers were sure that the Christian was in a much better position to fight disease after Baptism than

before, since he had the vitality of the divine life within him for his physical well-being by his incorporation into Christ. Baptism gave a physical restoration with God as well as a spiritual one.²⁷ The power of the risen Christ within the baptized enables him to achieve things he could not do on his own. Thus the baptized Christian has new strength to overcome the evil of disease, and although he may get sick, he no longer needs to fear, for he has a greater power in which to put his trust. The Spirit gives life and health. This positive outlook of the early Church is striking for its confidence and joy regarding victory over disease. It did not fear even terminal disease, since in death came a joy of a new life, and it was confident of God's protection. God saves the whole Christian person, as we saw above. The Christians here lacked introversion and self-pity in their attitude to disease, and even today it is the task of the Church alone to work to dispel these problems in the sick. There was no fear or bitterness, but rather a profound hope and trust in God, coming from the certainty that in Baptism He dwells in the body as well as the soul. We see this inner strength in the early martyrs, who were able to abide intense physical pain because of union with Christ. Baptism made Christians confident that God had overcome the woes of the flesh, even in death.

The healing power of God's grace was so strong that it appeared in the Eucharist also. The Fathers saw that our flesh needs support by the body and blood of Christ, since

even after Baptism, we remain weak. The Eucharist was seen as the source of sustaining power over evil. The liturgy for the Lord's Supper included a prayer for the renewal and relief of the bodies of the communicants. An example is the Liturgy of St. James, which contained these words:

Let us entreat from the Lord...guardian of our souls and bodies...that we may spend the remaining period of our life in peace and health. Let us entreat that the close of our lives may be Christian, without pain and without shame. For those who are in old age and infirmity, for the sick and suffering, and those who are troubled by unclean spirits, for their speedy cure from God and their salvation...for the health of the sick...

Remember, O Lord, the sick and afflicted, and those troubled by unclean spirits, their speedy healing from Thee, O God, and their salvation.²⁸

The importance of these intercessions for God's cure of the sick may be easily seen by the fact that they appear as a part of the anaphoral prayer, right after the Words of Institution and the Invocations.²⁹ This important liturgical action which proclaims Christ's closeness to his Church includes the healing of disease. Hence it is not going too far to say that for the early Christians, healing of physical illness is central to communion with God. Christians are sure that God is greater than disease.

The Liturgy of St. Mark effects a similar prayer for Christ's healing of the sick:

Look down in mercy and compassion, O Lord, and heal the sick among Thy people. May all our brethren who have gone or who are about to go abroad, safely reach their destination in due season....

Look down in mercy and compassion, O Lord, and heal the sick among Thy people. Deliver them and us, O Lord, from sickness and disease, and drive away the spirit of weakness. Raise up those who have been long afflicted, and heal those who are vexed with unclean spirits....Do Thou, O Lord, the physician of our souls and bodies, the guardian of all flesh, look down, and by Thy saving power heal all the diseases of soul and body.³⁰

Specific prayers that the grace of the Eucharist include healing were much more prevalent in the early liturgies than in our current Western rites. Other liturgies of this early period also pray for renewal and relief of our human bodies by the Eucharist. In Holy Communion, God has power to heal our bodies. Somehow this element has faded in the Church, especially in some Protestant circles where the Eucharist has lost much of its power. To the early Church, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper very clearly strengthened the power given in Baptism to be healed from the ravages of physical illness. In the Eucharist, Christians see God's healing love in a very definite way. Thus this sacrament, like Baptism, has important implications regarding God's healing of our diseases.

While these two sacraments witness to God's power and desire to heal the whole man, including physical disease, their *raison d'être* has always been wider than this one focus. The early Church did have one sacrament whose only use was in healing the sick. Interestingly enough, this sacrament which was the most basic in the process of healing in the early Christian Church later became altered in such a way that it was used only in extremis, or at the point of death, when it signified forgiveness of sins rather than its original meaning

of God's physical healing power. This special sacrament of healing is Holy Unction, or anointing with holy oil.

Unction was used specifically because it was seen as restoring in the sick the healing indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In the Roman Pontifical, based on the Gelasian (c.495) and Gregorian (c.600) Sacramentaries, we find the spiritual effects of Unction emphasized. It restored the power of the Holy Spirit which had been lost by the sick man due to inevitable human sin; the loss of the Spirit opened the man to attack by evil demons. Unction protected both body and mind, and was an "unguent of celestial medicine."³¹ It was effective against all illnesses, and expelled all pains and infirmities. It was used for all who were ill, and not just for those about to die. It gave complete soundness of one's whole being, with sacramental and spiritual as well as physical effect.³²

Clearly the early Church used it in dealing with all sickness in the certainty that it restored the healing presence of God and overcame the ravages of evil. At this time the sacrament itself did not signify forgiveness of sins, although the afflicted were permitted to make an oral confession, as we will see just below. The sacrament of Unction was one of definite hope for the early Church; it restored the health-giving presence of God. The urgency and absolution aspects familiar to us now grew up later, and they were not present in the early sacrament. Unction was given in the confident hope of God's ability to cast out disease. It was the

primary gift that the Church had with which to minister to disease. We can be sure that it set the minds of the afflicted at rest, and conveyed to them God's care. In a later chapter we will see how the modern Church is seeking to re-emphasize this peculiarly Christian insight.

Since we have seen why Unction was performed, it is interesting to see how it was done. It could be done either in church or at home, but in both cases the oil used was blessed by the bishop, whose healing office we have seen. When the ceremony was performed in church, seven priests were assisted by choir and congregation.³³ The sick were brought forward and anointed and hands laid on to impart the Holy Spirit, whatever their condition, and then (reflecting Jesus' own practice) were told to walk home. Dawson finds this last element helpful in its suggestion that the cure is already in process. The person then made his confession, and received communion. Unction here was repeated as long as there was need; it was not once and for all. At home, oil blessed by the bishop was applied, and confession--absolution made. Then the patient no longer felt cut off from God's grace,³⁴ and was assured of recovery.

Holy Unction was the sacrament especially for healing in the early centuries of the Christian Church. We might wonder why this practice ceased to be a major part of Christian ministry to the needs of diseased persons, since it was originally very widely used. Did Christianity give up one of its best ways to minister to disease? As we have seen, Unction

was used only as a sign of God's power to heal disease. Obviously, Christians were presented with a problem when anointed persons failed to recover, and perhaps even died. This situation showed Christians that they could not be absolutely sure that anointing would cause a person to be healed, and this lack of confidence removed much of the power of a sacrament, at least on one's ability to receive its benefits. Christians began to notice other means of healing in the world around them. Weatherhead says that oil was used for healing by the Church up to the eighth century, but that the expectation of receiving health by this means dwindled all along.³⁵ As a consequence, the passage of time changed Unction into a sacrament of absolution before death, as we will see in a subsequent chapter, and it lost most of its original aspect of God's physical cure of sickness. Time dulled one of Christianity's best means of bringing to the diseased the greatest hope in the universe.

Unction was also used to exorcise the demons who caused mental disorders. Modern insight shows us how really effective Unction was in this area, but the Church has declined from using this tool for healing, as we have seen. Dawson gives several reasons why Unction was helpful for those in emotional distress, and it is informative for us to stop and explore the field with him.³⁶ First of all, he says that Unction was individual; the patient was dealt with personally and lovingly, and he received encouragement from the Christian elders. This aspect is still important in Christian ministry

to disease. Secondly, the afflicted were always in association with healthy minds, and given wholesome work to do; the grim isolation which characterizes our modern hospitals was absent. Also, the Church had an optimistic outlook, and tried to give a courageous faith to the afflicted. Without this peace of mind, little could be done. The Church had no fear of life in this world because it was sure of God's love, and it attempted to rid patients of fears which might have caused the illness. Lastly, the Church tried to raise children in this atmosphere of love, which would improve their emotional and physical well-being. It is thus evident that Unction was one of the best weapons in the arsenal of the Church against disease, for whatever may or may not have been its physical effect, it surely engendered hope within the sick in a way that no other method has been able to do. The medieval Church, as we will see, tried to achieve this hope by means of the Eucharist, but the loss of Unction as a healing sacrament leaves a large gap in the Church's ministry to disease. Perhaps it would be well to reclaim it.

In our consideration of Unction we have alluded to another healing practice prevalent in the early Church, namely the exorcism of the evil spirits which caused disease. Exorcism often went on even without Unction, for it was by itself an important part of the work of Christianity. It tended to be used in more violent illnesses which caused peculiar behavior, such as epilepsy or emotional disorders. The Church saw itself as heir to Christ's war against evil spirits, and for

this reason exorcism was very important indeed. Christians saw the world as full of evil spirits, and they had an invincible weapon for dealing with them, and this tool was the power of exorcism which God gave to them.³⁷ Christians discovered that the Church was able actually to cast out the demons which they saw as causing disease, and thus they could not stand idly by and do nothing in such a case.

Exorcism was so prevalent in the early Church that an order of exorcists grew within the Church. As the ministry to the sick became more and more exacting, laity were given a position which involved them in this work; exorcism was not restricted to bishops. In Cyprian's time, the order was regularized and approved by the Church; such recognition by the Church may have been caused by abuse of exorcism (using it for personal prestige or as a magic trick) which thus required action by the Church.³⁸ Exorcism was still frequently practiced even as late as the fourth century.

The prevalence of exorcism as a way of treating and overcoming disease was natural in light of the popular view that sickness was caused by Satan. We have seen how the Gospels and St. Paul see Satan as very powerful in this world, and how one of his plagues is to cause disease. Yet Christians also know that God is more powerful than Satan, as Christ demonstrated in the exorcisms which he performed. Very surely they saw disease as evil, and they were equally certain that in Christ, God had overcome that evil. Christians carry on Christ's battle against evil. Christianity, above all other

religions in the world, has the power to cure such disease.

Our culture has long since abandoned the idea that certain afflictions are caused by Satanic demons which can be exorcised. Certainly we would not want to resurrect exorcism as a way of treating disease nowadays. Harnack, however, at the beginning of this century, explored what exorcism can mean to a scientific world, and he came up with some helpful observations.³⁹ We will consider a few of these here because they will demonstrate the early Christian attitude to disease. Whenever a person was victimized by a state of fear and the soul was convulsed by its power, his will could be freed from bondage only by a strong, holy, outside will. Exorcism does this freeing, and it means two things--first, that by ourselves we cannot defeat such disease, and also that God can do so and He does so through the hands of our fellow men--at least so would this writer construe the meaning of exorcism. God does not like to see us in such bondage. Harnack goes on to show that while the Gospel points out the reality of the power of disease, these writings also show that God cures it. He concludes that it would be hard to imagine the third century without the hope of the Church. Christ was victorious over these evil spirits. It is important to notice that non-Christians were able to exorcise in a few individual cases, but that they could not attest to the hope of God's victory. Harnack gives a quotation which demonstrates the passionate concern which inspired Christian exorcism, as opposed to any other.

Let them make holy requests and entreaties to God, cheerfully, circumspectly, and purely, without hatred or malice. For such is the manner in which we are to visit a sick brother or sister--without guile or covetousness or noise or talkativeness or pride or any behaviour alien to piety, but with the meek and lowly spirit of Christ. Let them exorcise the sick with fasting and with prayer; instead of using elegant phrases, neatly arranged and ordered, let them act frankly like men who have received the gift of healing from God, to God's glory.⁴⁰

We notice here that the Christians found in Christ a power unlike any other for overcoming evil. It was not easy to exorcise, for it required firm spiritual discipline, but it could be accomplished in the name of Christ. As always, it was done out of a passionate concern for helping those who suffer.

The Fathers saw many diseases as caused by evil demons. Tertullian said that the ability of Christians to cast out demons is ample proof that such beings exist; but they are under the complete control of Christ and Christians through Christ.⁴¹ The great insight here is the defeat of these demons by Christ. The power of evil to cause disease is far less than Christ's power to heal from it. These exorcisms actually took place, according to contemporary records. Christians had no doubt of exorcism, and were certain that God had overcome disease here. The Church was impelled to use its gift of cure to help fight the battle against evil.

Exorcism dropped off after three centuries, and it gradually faded completely away. Frost accounts for this state of affairs by pointing out that exorcism needed a strong spiritual

life in the Church in order to be effective, and that after the periods of persecution ended and Christianity became the state religion, this spiritual life faded.⁴² While the modern Church need not lament the loss of its primitive demonology, we have definitely lost a valuable certainty of God's power actually to expell certain types of disorders. Exorcism saw that God actually cures disease. The primitive theological perspective of God's battle against evil includes a victory over emotional distress. Such distress, very common today, implores the confident insight achieved by exorcism.

There is one area of concern which has always been the special insight of the Church, today as well as in the primitive Church, and this realm is its theological affirmation of the implications of God's love. The hope which comes from seeing what God has already given us in Christ is found only in the Church. While this view makes no physical effort actually to stop disease, it does bring into all of life a joy which is greater even than is the suffering from disease.

The early Church focused on the Resurrection, for this event was the complete vindication of the reality and the power of God's love. All human life is released from bondage to evil and suffering. Death had been overcome not only for Christ but also for those who had been made corporate in him by Baptism.⁴³ The Christian, then, could meet death with a fearless confidence because of the sure hope coming from Christ's victory. Physical death thus had no fear for the earliest Christians, and in fact they accepted it freely.

Death had lost its terror, since it was the dawn for the soul of a new day of fellowship with God. Frost points out that as we go back in history towards the date of the Resurrection of Christ, the more incidental does physical death become, for the stronger is the note of joy and victory in it.⁴⁴ These elements subsided with time. The importance here with regard to disease lies in the fact that for the Christian, whatever the extent of his sufferings, there was nothing to fear; even sicknesses so severe that death ensued were not as gripping as the love of God. When healing failed to take place there was still hope, because not even death could destroy it. The critically sick Christian was sure that even here God's love was powerfully present and would sustain him should he die. Disease was no longer a fright nor terror.

The Incarnation and Baptism also spoke to this problem, since they affirm the goodness of the physical body. As Christ became flesh, we can be sure that Christ loves our flesh. Tertullian said that Christ restores our flesh from every harassing malady; "when leprous, He cleanses it of the stain; when blind, He rekindles its light; when palsied, He renews its strength; when possessed with devils, He exorcises it; when dead, He re-animates it."⁴⁵ Christ delivers the body from painful diseases as part of the fact that it is saved. The Incarnation joins human flesh to God. God took our nature upon Him to release us from sin and disease (Clement of Alexandria). By Baptism, as we have seen, we are definitely made to share in the positive relation of our flesh to God. Baptism cleanses the body as well as the soul, as we saw above.

These theological affirmations enabled the Christian Church to bring joy into the sufferings of disease, even where these sufferings could not be healed. This intense view of hope is basic to the Christian Gospel; since it is found nowhere else, the theological reasons for Christian ministry to the sick are clear. This hope which surpasses even death is perhaps the greatest Christian contribution to the battle with disease and suffering. We cannot accuse this view of being other-worldly and idealistic, since, as we have seen, this hope included provision for actual cure. God's love is a healing love--even when it does not physically cure disease. The failure of Unction or exorcism to heal was no problem during the earliest Christian centuries, for God's victory over evil was still certain.

This chapter has attempted to show that the Christian Church during its early years was not discouraged by disease. It was confident that God enabled it to heal the ravages of sickness, and it had an insight by Christ into the power of God's love which removed fear from the most lonely battle of all, death. Early Christians were very much concerned with healing, since getting rid of earthly suffering was part of God's victory over evil here. Witness to Christ's victory had to go on until the parousia. After the hope of the eschaton faded, the Church began to deal with the special problem of the healing of disease. Yet in any case, healing disease was fundamental to the earliest Christian ministry, and it was important work of the Church. We have seen the ways in

which the Church carried out its healing function. It always faced disease with confidence in God's victory over such suffering.

The Church slowly lost its gift of spiritual healing. Weatherhead gives some reasons to account for the loss of this wonderful gift From God's grace.⁴⁶ The incredible power of Jesus through his embodiment of God was real to those who knew him in the flesh, but it became more incredible as time went on; while the Holy Spirit continued Christ's work through the Church, the world pressed in upon the faith in Christ and strong belief became a greater strain than when he was bodily present. Faith diminished and love was tested, and thus healing power was lowered. That author also sees that the discipline and unity in the Christian fellowship weakened after Pentecost; the Church's faith in the power of the Holy Spirit diminished. An interesting result of this demise is that as less demands could be made on the faith of the healer, more were made upon the faith of the afflicted. Also, Christians focused more on preaching and less on healing as the latter failed to meet with success. Cyprian blamed this weakening of power on the sins of Christians.

Weatherhead adds that there were non-religious means of healing to be found in Greek culture. Drugs acted for healing regardless of the faith of the sick person, and consequently were the easy way out. Tatian was one Christian who protested "ascribing to matter the relief of the sick" because drugs detracted from "pious acknowledgment of God." Drugs

removed the focus from God onto man. Also, exorcism was carried on by quacks, who used it with no reference to faith in Christ. That author says that superstition grew up as a result, and that it gradually replaced faith and love, as we will see in the next chapter. The Constantinian conversion was another factor in the fall of the Church's healing power, for henceforth it was easy and popular to become Christian, with little demand on personal faith. While this event strengthened the Church in numbers, it weakened the Church in faith, unity, and spiritual fervor. There were more Christians to minister to, and the Church had to relax its intensive care for sick persons. Then that author concludes that even in the third century, science was beginning to drive out faith. We can be sure that the Church had to cope with such philosophies that are not centered upon God. Thus as culture engulfed the Christianity to which it formerly had been hostile, the Christian ranks grew to include many more people of various backgrounds, and thus the intensity of faith in God's healing power began to diminish.

The Church became more and more involved in controversy. Cyprian, at the end of the third century, noticed that the Church was no longer solid but was racked by differences of opinion, division, and moral laxity; thus the Church was weakened. The Church's "prevailing power in prayer" was no longer intense enough to heal. Cyprian observed that even in prayer were dissonant voices, and this state of affairs was very displeasing to God.⁴⁷ From this time on, the Church was split by

controversy. The vibrant Spirit-filled life of the first two centuries passed away. At this time, written testimony to the power of Christian healing falls off markedly, and we may assume that healing dwindled. The spiritual intensity had gone.

The Church changed its focus to forgiving and reconciling rather than healing. It sought to heal one's relationship to God rather than his disease itself. As we will see in the next chapter, confession grew, and Unction took on the nature of absolution; both of these changes are important to the Church's ministry, but are not as much a witness to God's great love as is healing itself, which affirms the goodness of the body before God. We will watch these shifts to absolution with not a little sorrow, for God's victory over evil and suffering seems to have been pushed to the sidelines. Yet whatever the theological shift, we will still notice the wonderful Christian concern for persons, which helps the sick because of Christ's love for them. The Church ministered to the sick in new and interesting ways.

CHAPTER III

The Church from Medieval Times to the Modern Age

Onwards from the time of its recognition by Constantine, the Christian Church grew, and it did so in various ways. It was inundated with new members who came from diverse backgrounds. Many of these converts came because of social conformity rather than intense personal experience of the healing power of Christ's love, and as a consequence the Church had to alter some of its original practices to make the Gospel more evident to its new members. The new Christians were unable to meet the spiritual demands which the early Church made of those who sought to be healed, and thus many pastoral functions in the Church became formalized.¹ Clebsch and Jaekle point out that a reason for this formalizing--perhaps better called institutionalizing or ceremonializing--can be seen in the fact that the adoption of Christianity as the state religion forced it to become a unifier of culture. These authors go on to explain that the Church henceforth sought to help a wide variety of people to get a Christian perspective on their problems, including disease. From the fifth century on, the Latin Church had to deal with hordes of barbarian tribes who swept over western Europe, and the Church perceived Christian description and remedies of its troubles.² Christ was intimately involved in the new cultural situation where the Church found itself.

In short, the Christian environment began to change. This present writer has the theory that after the state stopped persecuting the Church, the Church began less to see the world as unfriendly and more to concern itself with the problems of this world. It emphasized the cure of ills rather than just sustaining the afflicted until the end. As the world was no longer hostile--and indeed, with the growing influx of new members, it was actually asserting its need of the Church--Christians began to focus more on the real depth of problems in our world, and forgot a bit about the theological hope of their cure. The world pressed in upon the Church. Since culture was no longer hostile to Christianity, Christians began to pay more attention to the sufferings with which men have to struggle; such a trend would have been inevitable, since Christians have a compassionate concern for the pain and sorrow of their fellows.

Developments such as these account for what has been one of the most important changes of focus on disease by the Christian Church. The Church was led to concern itself with the nature of life in the society of its time. God's victory over and elimination of the evil in life (such as disease) slowly came to be seen as God's working by means of our difficulties. John Chrysostom found God's way in the cultural conscience of his time.³ Life was seen as less under the control of evil spirits and more under God's control. Disease was still seen as undesirable in God's world, but by the Middle Ages the Christian view had reverted to that of the Old

Testament, where possibly God sent disease; yet this time it was seen as a God-given test of faith and discipline rather than His punishment. This shift is indeed a noteworthy one, and it is a course from which the modern Church is only just beginning to change. It is very interesting to watch this alteration in outlook from God's complete opposition to and victory over disease, to an acceptance of it as part of Christian discipline. Christians still prayed to God for His cure, but their complete certainty that He would always cure illness had waned. We will now look at how this process took place.

As the Church's ranks grew, certain men within the Church lamented the watering-down of her discipline, and who consequently withdrew into religious orders where they lived together in monasteries under intense discipline. The monasteries became more and more important, and in medieval times they provided the Church with her leaders and most of her outlook. Monastic discipline even filtered down to the common folk as well, and the outlook on disease is an area where this new monastic view is clearly seen. The monastic ideal was to purge the desires of the flesh due to a simultaneous fear and love of God.⁴ Christians were to strive for humility at the cost of their own physical comfort; they were humbly to accept what life brought them and rely instead on a close spiritual relationship with God. Fear of God was very real here, and the focus was on man's attitude to Him rather than vice-versa. Spirit was more important than the body.

The monastic rules saw illness as an opportunity for spiritual discipline. They did not try to account for the cause of disease, for they saw it as a given fact of existence. This suffering may be used to help us draw closer to God in love. Thus, they tended to accept illness more gladly than did the first Christians, who saw it as utterly evil.

This monastic attitude was clear in the rule of St. Benedict (529), who set up a twelve-step ladder to move from fear of God to a humble love of God. The fourth step of this rule indicates that the monk is to endure in silent patience all obstacles and injuries that beset his path.⁵ Humility meant that the monk acceded to illness or other personal difficulties without asking God to cure him of it. Illness here became an opportunity for spiritual discipline; the troubles of the flesh may help one to grow in spiritual humility. Some monks actually went so far as to seek out mortification of the flesh as a requirement of humility of the soul. In such extreme cases, bodily suffering was believed to be desirable for the welfare of the spirit. Physical pain was no longer believed to be evil.

We may be sure that discipline as strong as what we have seen was not prevalent outside the monasteries, and yet there are definite basic elements here which filtered out into the medieval age as a whole, due to the powerful influence of monasteries. The emphasis had begun to shift away from God's love of and redemption of the whole man, body as well as soul, and had instead latched on to methods of bodily discipline

for man to grow towards God in spiritual love. This author suggests that the medieval monastic mind saw that God's love can be found by anyone, but that rigorous physical discipline can help him do so. If we learn to accept illness without complaint, we learn how to focus outside ourselves onto God, rather than on our own personal discomfort. Illness was not seen as cause for despair; indeed, it often was perceived to be a help in the Christian journey to heaven. Discipline was important for the medieval world; even the laity had to follow strict rules for interpreting life.

Yet we must not conclude that strict discipline displaced Christian compassion. The Church still retained its concern for helping people to deal with their personal problems. God cares for the health and welfare of His people, and through the Church He acts to help them. Never has the Church been able to sit back and stoically accept illness as the inevitable gift of God's love. Illness may help us to realize our own weakness and throw ourselves upon God's love, but it is not something that Christians desire. The way of suffering is part of Christianity, as is seen in the Cross; but the Cross has power only because of the Resurrection. The ultimate Christian affirmation is that God's love overcomes evil. With this insight to inspire them, Christians have always worked to help those who suffer to come to know more fully the power of God's grace. What we have just said about illness as discipline is simply to describe a new outlook on disease, which saw that disease can help in one's spiritual growth and discipline; it

does not mean that disease ought not to be healed. As we will very soon see, the medieval age was very creative in devising new ways to convey to a completely Christianized culture that God is able to heal our suffering, and that He desires to do so. The Gospel delivers people from the troubles of this life. Certainly one important function here is to help those who are sick. The medieval Church did so.

Pope Gregory the Great was one of the first great Christian pastors to troubled members of his flock. At the end of the sixth century, he produced a work entitled Pastoral Care, which had the aim of guiding troubled people into Christian belief. He knew that these troubles were torturing, and he cared enough about each individual soul to devise policies to be used by his priests in helping those who suffered. Gregory took note of the nature of these personal problems, and suggested ways in which to help them. Here we find the beginning of Christian pastoral concern for each person as an individual, each one needing some different kind of help. Christians henceforth help the sick because they are persons with problems, and not just to demonstrate God's universal victory over evil. Christian compassion actually grew during the medieval period, and still it is one of the great motivating factors in Christian pastoral ministry.

Doubtless the most distinctively medieval of all the approaches of the Church to disease at this time is its sacramental theology. The medieval period is when the sacraments grew in importance (and consequently in ceremony and in number)

until they covered every important aspect of life. Sacraments were stretched so that they covered every crisis in the lives of individuals and groups.⁶ The sacraments became important because they objectified the reality of God's love for a wide variety of people, and demonstrated to them that God was involved in the crises of their lives. The Church thus began to embroider its original sacraments into the fancy ceremonies which we know today in the Roman Church. The medieval growth of sacraments shows two things: first, that the Church was more and more affirming God's grace in this life, in our daily affairs here on earth--in short, it was moving away from its anticipation of the parousia; and second, that the Church was using a system, a clear mechanical means of conveying God's grace. This sacramental approach, then, would lead us to believe that the Church was considering more the problems of disease in our world here and now than it was thinking of God's forthcoming victory over evil, and that it ministered to the needs of the sick here rather than later. These conclusions are borne out by the evidence which follows.

Sacraments give us God's healing grace in a specially concrete way, and in its growing concern for men's welfare in this life, the medieval Church found sacraments very useful. The parish priest could dispense divine medicine when needed for bodily health.⁷ The sacrament of ordination enabled priests in the name of the Church to diagnose and cure men's illnesses. The Mass was the most important of all, for it provided grace in all situations, including disease; as we will

see shortly, a consecrated Host was believed to heal disease. Reserved Sacrament for the sick is a remnant of this theology. Sacraments healed; the medieval Church was absolutely sure of that fact. Only the Church had the sacraments, which were very important when illness was present.

At the end of the previous chapter we alluded to the rise of superstition as an impression among the newly converted heathen of the power of God's healing grace and love. While doubtless many modern scholars have been all too prone to condemn the Middle Ages as the time when Church superstitions flourished (and from which the Church has not yet recovered), their basic point is well taken. People at this time were uneducated, and the love of God was so excitingly incredible that they readily became superstitious about it.

The veneration of relics shows how this practice extended to healing, since objects connected with a saint of old were deemed to have healing powers. Clothing or bones of saints were kept in each church, and as a result were highly sought after. Every cathedral or chapel had to have some relic in order to be considered sacred.⁸ The sick believed that they had only to come in contact with the relic in order to be healed. This belief was very strong; whatever the extent of misery due to disease, Christ would heal it. Superstitious practices such as this were firmly grounded in faith that God's love precluded illness, and that He acted to get rid of it through His saints. We must respect the faith cherished by relic veneration, even if we now disagree with the superstition involved. Another practice of this same kind was incubation,

sleeping in holy places. In old cathedrals we can still see indentations in the side of tombs of saints deemed to have healing powers; here pilgrims huddled overnight in order to be healed.

Superstition extended also to the Eucharist itself. The consecrated Host was believed to have healing powers.⁹ Exposure to the Host was believed to be enough to heal the sick. Even this basic sacrament in the Church was seen as a healing agent. Popular piety realized the power of God's grace in the Eucharist.

Superstitions such as these bordered on belief in magical powers, and since such belief has no place in modern Christianity, we cannot lament their passing. Yet we have seen that behind these popular understandings lay a very strong faith in God's ability and desire to heal. The medieval man could give no lengthy theological explanation of why men get sick, but he was sure that God could cure him when he got sick. We have lost much of this confidence, doubtless because healing now is the concern of medicine rather than of the Church. Yet there is no reason for a loss of confidence in God's desire to heal, be it by medicine or other means. Our scientific age is not superstitious, but we must be careful not to weed out faith in God's healing power in our zeal to eliminate superstition from Christianity.

It was at this time that Unction became a sacrament for the dying and ceased to be used for healing. The Church was seen to be the "temple of healing" throughout the Middle Ages,

and people came to Church for healing just as we go to hospitals.¹⁰ Healing was a function of the ministry. Yet anointing no longer was used universally to heal the sick. Originally, as we have seen, Unction was given to anyone who was sick, regardless of his illness, and was not used only with those in imminent danger of death. In the last chapter, we suggested possible reasons for the abandonment of Unction as a sacrament of healing. We may be sure that with the all-inclusive importance of sacraments in the medieval Church, a sacrament was sought to cover men at their death, so that they die sure of God's love in the lonely journey after death; there were plenty of sacraments to pervade men's lives, and one was needed for the hour of death. This present author contends that the abandonment of Unction as a sacrament to heal disease was not entirely negative. It was not just a sense of uncertainty in healing or a lack of faith on the part of the Church that caused anointing to lose its healing function, for it gained another one which is very important from a Christian pastoral standpoint. God's sacraments bring grace to all our living and also to our dying. The healing function was sacramentally given over to the Eucharist; yet since healing is not the sole purpose of the Eucharist, the Church lost its sacrament which was used exclusively to bring God's healing grace to men.

During this medieval period is the time when Unction lost its original purpose as a sacrament of healing and became instead the sacrament of absolution. We will shortly see how

the Council of Trent in 1549 made this change final and irrevocable. Yet as we consider the medieval time of Christian growth and change, we find that the strictness of Christian demands on those who received the sacrament of Unction helps account for this change. Scherzer claims that in the twelfth-thirteenth centuries, the sacrament became used only for the dying because the clergy made stringent demands before they would administer it; he also says that after Unction was given, people were afraid that if they recovered they would sin again and thus lose their sinless state.¹¹ As a result, the sacrament became used near death so that the patient would not sin again. Unction came to be focused on the soul rather than the body; sin was the condition which it healed.

The medieval mind separated body and soul, and as a result had lost much of the original Christian affirmation of the goodness of the body and God's desire to see it free from the ravages of disease. Unction became connected with removal of sin rather than the gracious bestowing of healing. It lost much of its original hope for God's healing and victory over evil; yet it retained its subjective and personal hope that even in death we are certain of God's love.

Unction became a sacrament for the dying, and has been used since this time only in extremis, in the last moments of our life here on earth. It is now called Extreme Unction for this reason. It shows us that we die forgiven, by the grace of God. Unction has always been used to put a person at peace with God to enable him to receive spiritual blessings.¹²

It could not heal the body unless a strong faith was achieved first. As other means of healing arose which made no demand on faith, Unction was needed less for healing and thus it became used as absolution. Unction was never healing by magical powers, and its demands for faith in God were great. Its shift in function, however, was not so much the easy way out as it was a witness to the fact that God's grace extends even beyond this life.

The medieval Church was particularly conscious of human sin. We would expect such an awareness to have arisen naturally, since as time went on after Christ's Resurrection and Ascension, the world pressed in more upon the Church, and Christians realized more and more their alienation and separation from God. Additional Church ceremonies (such as marriage or confirmation) were seen as sacraments in order to objectify that God's grace comes to us during all times in our lives. One of these medieval sacraments became very important, and it had many of the same qualities as did Extreme Unction. This sacrament was penance. We shall spend a short time examining the pastoral aspects of the medieval penitentials (books for priests, with instructions on being confessors), because we will find in them the same individual healing concern which marked the early Church's attitude towards the sick. Indeed, sick penitents were to be treated with special compassion and care.

In the early centuries of the Christian Church, personal confessions were made before the entire congregation, and the

penance which was imposed was generally severe. What is important for us to notice here is that the Christian Church over the years began to have an interest in the individual person who was sinning and not just in the sins which he did. In the medieval penitentials we find a loving concern for the person rather than a theological concern with sin and evil. More particularly do we find that these instructions for priests extend a tender helping hand to those who are sick. The fact that the sick received special attention in the penitentials did not mean that the medieval Church felt that a person's illness was God's punishment for his sins; on the contrary, the Church realized that the sick were weaker than those who were well, and as a result the sick needed special care. The Church was to care for those who were sick, in order to help them recover from their illness.

The Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 helped focus the Church's ministry to those who are ill. In Canon 21 it instructed priests to "pour wine and oil into the wounds of one injured after the manner of a skillful physician."¹³ Also it commanded that physicians of the body call for physicians of the soul when a person is ill, so that the latter can restore spiritual health to enable bodily medicine to be of greater benefit (Canon 22).¹⁴ Thus we see that there were men who ~~healed~~ ^{healed} apart from a person's relationship with God; but the Church maintained that such healing was ineffective without also the health of the soul. The health of the soul was the Church's business; it had not turned its back on its

responsibility for the body, either. While the Church may not have done all the actual healing any longer, it did watch out to see that bodily healing was properly done. The Council forbade any physician from using sinful means to restore bodily health, under pain of anathema.¹⁵ The Church recognized its responsibility for healing even when it did not do so itself. Physicians were subject to the Church; the Church took care of the sick. There was, of course, an element of sin involved in disease in the eyes of the medieval Church; yet sin did not cause disease. Nevertheless, the removal of sin would help in recovery.

Medieval concern with personal confession was the first clear occasion in the history of Christian pastoral care when we find the Church interested in a person's individual case and needs rather than an eschatological battle with evil. The Church was beginning to notice differences between various persons afflicted with the same problem. Different people need different care. God's victory over evil did not mean to treat all disease in the same way. Indeed, treatment of sick bodies and treatment of souls had much in common. McNeill shows that the Church was learning from the physicians that there was more than prayer to healing. Even as early as the seventh century, St. Columban had observed that spiritual physicians should follow the method of physicians of the body and use various treatments to heal the "wounds, fevers, transgressions, sorrows, sicknesses, and infirmities of souls."¹⁶ The Church had begun to notice each individual case and to

vary the penance to meet the problem. The Church made an effort to get to know the sinners to whom she ministered. We can see a trend in penalizing sin less and less severely; sin is where we need help, not punishment.

Our concern in considering medieval penance has been to see a softening attitude towards disease. All the sufferings of life gradually came to be seen as weakness needing sustenance rather than as evil needing exorcism. Sickness required tender care and not a battle with Satan. Surely there were many in the Church who saw disease as sinful, but this newer attitude began firmly to develop. Sick persons were to be treated carefully and lovingly; physicians would help cure them.

Penalties were severe for Christians who ignored the needs of their sick brethren. A penitential from the monastery at Silos, Spain (c.800) prescribes thirty days of penance for a watcher leaving the bedside of a patient who grows worse or dies before he returns. The fifteenth-century Penitential of Ciudad allows a confessor to delay penance until the illness is over, since the illness is a hindrance to confession.¹⁷ Disease is treated here with patience and sympathy. Gone is the early Christian element of bearing disease until the Kingdom of God comes; the medieval Church began to see it as a weakness needing nursing care. Cure was becoming more scientific and less dependent on one's relationship to God, since medicine was in its primitive stages. Even so, the Church

watched carefully all medical work, since healing was from God. Disease involved the soul and the body, and medicine dealt with only the latter. The Church through its sacraments was the basic source of the joy of healing.

Medieval Christians lost the early Christian fearlessness of death, and came to see it as the inescapable end of every man's life; they affirmed this life here. Plagues came along, such as the Black Death in 1349. Death was unpleasant but inescapable. Books about illness, dying, and death began to appear; illness and death was a very real problem in the medieval Church, and there were no easy answers.

Jean Gerson (d.1429) was one of the first to consider this problem. In his essay On the Art of Dying, he sought to provide material by which "one friend might support another in the article of death."¹⁸ He pointed out the procedure for the Church to use at the hour of one's death; it involved repentance (for a closer relationship with God), a promise to live a better life if he recovered, prayers (including the Virgin Mary and patron saints), Eucharist, and a final admonition to the family and friends not to encourage the patient with false hopes of recovery.¹⁹ Here we see how the Church took illness and death seriously, and engendered no false hopes. Terminal illness was a problem requiring complete honesty. It also required the help and companionship of others. The power of death was acknowledged. We cannot say, however, that the early Christian element of victory over death had entirely disappeared. Medieval counsels for the dying pointed out that death

could be swallowed up in victory for the believer; he could die with dignity despite death's terrors.

The prevailing medieval view of disease was that it is a real and tremendous struggle. The Church had many resources of healing available, but suffering was real too. This was the period when the Crucifix--the suffering Christ--came into common use. By the advent of the printing press, we were given more material to show the medieval mind's discovery of the grim aspects of sickness and death. In later editions of Gerson's book, gory illustrations were added. Death was not treated lightly. The artists show a grotesque struggle, with devils seeking to destroy the sufferer's faith, hope, and patience.²⁰ The dying man has "great and grievous temptations, greater than those he has met hitherto."

Thus we have seen that as the troubles of life in this world pressed in upon the Church, its insight into the Christian hope of God's victory over evil began to dim. Illness became a matter of real concern. The early Christian proclamation of God's victory over disease was hard to validate when the eschaton had not come and diseases continued to ravage the land. The focus of the Church shifted in such a way that it found Christ's miraculous cures very difficult, and consequently it turned to other ways of healing. We cannot say that the Christian gospel of hope had disappeared into superstition, but we can say that Christians were more aware of pain than they were in the early Church.

The medieval period saw the Church set up nursing orders

of monks and nuns on a large scale. Nursing the sick was so important to the Church that it devoted much effort to the situation. The Benedictines set up nursing orders of nuns. Monte Cassino provided a place for women to nurse the sick in hospitals or at home.²¹ Other nursing orders were founded at this time. Hospitals were built, and there monks and laymen (often knights) devoted themselves to caring for the sick. The first hospital in England was built at St. Albans in 794. Of course, these hospitals were nothing like what we know today. Cures were done by superstitious and sacramental means.²² Yet the foundation of hospitals shows that the Church was making an effort to heal disease in an organized way. The Church took seriously its task to heal men of their infirmities, by whatever means were possible.

The important observation to make about the medieval period and Christian dealings with disease is that pastors endeavored to reconcile each individual person to a righteous God. We saw how at first the Church conveyed a mystical impression of God's forgiveness; later discipline grew up to assure Christians that they could be sure of God's protection if they would conform their lives to certain principles.²³ The Church used various means to show that Christians still are united with God. The power of disease was real, but the affirmation of God's healing love was still stronger.

We now turn our gaze towards the Reformation and a few centuries thereafter (1500-1800). Many of the currents considered above will re-appear here. Yet since the Reformation

and its aftermath is a reaction to a number of elements in the medieval Church, we may expect to see a few changes in the Church's ministry to disease.

The Roman Church was changed the least by the new currents, since it remained as true as possible to its heritage. Quite naturally, then, we would expect the Council of Trent (1549-52) to continue unchanged many medieval approaches to disease. This conclusion is certainly true with regard to Unction. The Council definitely proclaimed that Unction blots away all sin before death; this view is quite a change from that of the early Church that Unction restores bodily health. Yet Trent's view is not unwarranted in Christian tradition. Origen saw this sacrament as one way to acquire forgiveness of sins.²⁴ In 789, Theodaelf, Bishop of Orleans, warned his priests that no one should die without Unction since it signified forgiveness of sins and prepared a sick person for death; it reconciled the soul (even if not the body) to God. These beginnings of explicit association of Unction with sin, plus the medieval growth of this notion, caused Trent to limit the sacrament to a person whose sickness caused apprehensions of approaching death. It became a preparation for death. The healing aspects of the sacrament were not denied, but they became healing from sin rather than restoration to physical health.

This present author contends that this shift may well show an important change in attitude on the part of the Reformation Church towards disease. We remember that the early

Christians saw disease as caused by evil which God had overcome. Thus, Unction was used to purge out evil powers from the body and to restore the health which God wills for man. Unction casts out evil. But by the time of the Reformation, disease was not seen as completely evil, since there was an idea of disease as discipline for faith; also science showed that illness does not come from abstract forces. Consequently, Unction was still used to purge out evil--but that evil was human sin and not disease. Thus, even in the Council of Trent we can see a softening of the Christian attitude that disease is the result of evil forces, in order to minister to disease as a time when humans need help and tender care.

This conclusion is borne out by the rapid spread of Roman Catholic nursing orders after 1500. St. Vincent de Paul organized the first sisterhood of charity. The House of St. Lazarus in Paris cared for the blind and the sick. In 1634, St. Vincent set up an order of matrons to care for patients in the Hotel Dieu; he also founded a large hospital for the poor in Paris, called the Salpetrière. Here we find a man of great compassion for the sick who is moved to bend his own efforts and those of others to relieve the sick. It is right for Christians to use their human abilities to help those who are sick.

St. Vincent's sisterhoods were guided by an excellent outlook towards disease. They pledged to care for the sick regardless of how loathesome each disease might be; they promised never to fear death; they ministered to the needs of

each patient as if he were Christ personally (each person is valuable to Christ and shares in His suffering). Each patient was to be treated the same, without favoritism. The sisters sought always to be kind regardless of how disagreeable the patient might be.²⁵ In these nursing orders we find warm Christian compassion giving birth to careful techniques to be used when ministering to the sick. Human effort for healing is part of God's scheme. Loving self-sacrifice was the mark of these nurses, and is a particularly Christian approach. Christians cannot stand and let their fellows suffer without help. This personal concern comes because each person has value to Christ.

Jesuits carried on medical missions. St. Francis Xavier was a pioneer in the field, and it grew in the Church as time went on. Medicine was freely used in these missions.²⁶

In the Roman Church we have seen a more tender attitude towards the sick, who are in need of sustenance and care; hospital care can help the disease go away. Human nursing care is able to deal with disease. Illness is not just the result of a cosmic battle of evil with God; no, it is caused by factors with which we can deal. God enables Christians to heal.

When we turn to look at the Protestant Reformers, we find that they too were concerned with pastoral care of the sick. Martin Luther was perhaps the most sensitive pastor of all, even though he is best known for his academic disputations. He was very much aware of the Christian ministry to disease.

He rejected the worship of saints and the use of relics to heal disease; these practices were superstitious and non-Scriptural. He used prayer and Scripture for healing purposes.²⁷ Luther re-discovered that healing depends on personal closeness to God, and not on mechanical invocations. God's presence heals. The sacraments do help to bring us this presence, and thus Luther put great emphasis on the two Scriptural sacraments, as well as private confession; but confession was voluntary for the health of the soul.²⁸ Personal faith is the touchstone of Christian healing.

Luther by his prayers once healed his associate, Melancthon. He refused to be discouraged by disease, and he advised his friend also to have hope: "Be of good courage, Philip, you will not die; give no place to the spirit of sorrow, and be not your own murderer, but trust in the Lord, who can stay and make alive again, can wound and bind up, can smite and heal again."²⁹

This quotation implies that God causes disease as well as heals it. Yet the wrath of God from whence sickness comes is meant merely to drive us into God's love, without which we have no hope.³⁰ Misery is an opportunity to share in God's grace. Thus, while sickness is a painful event of which we wish to be rid, it is likewise an opportunity to receive God's grace, for which we may be thankful. Disease is not God's punishment; it is part of God's love. In illness we share in the suffering of Christ.

Luther wrote a classic work on his version of the

Christian attitude to disease, called the "Fourteen Comforts for the Weary and Heavy Laden." We will consider a few of the ideas which Luther expresses in this work.³¹ He says that Christ commands us to do works of mercy in order to mitigate the present evils in this world. Christ took our illness upon himself, and thus visiting the sick is visiting Christ. When a Christian is sick, Christ also is sick, and our illness is endured not by us but by Christ. No suffering in our experience is the greatest evil in us; we are such great sinners that we never experience the greatest evils in us. When God chastens us, He lays on us only the lighter evils; otherwise we would perish. The evil we do feel rests lightly upon us, for our freedom from pain is greater than our pain. Our sufferings are nothing like what we deserve. Weakness of the body is less grave than is spiritual weakness. Even the evils of death are less than the evils of life; Christ feared death (as we do), but we all welcome it as release from the evils of this life. Even apart from our sins, we enjoy so many blessings that an occasional spell of illness is no grounds for complaint. Our blessings far outweigh the evil, and hence we should not be surprised to have bitterness among the blessings. Unrelieved sweetness is intolerable. We cannot accept good things without this tempering by evil. We should try gladly to accept this tempering which God sends. Even greater than our bodily blessings are the blessings within us, namely faith in Christ. This faith gives Christians certainty of future blessings (as non-Christians cannot be). God gives us this

hope to sustain us and prevent us from despair. Christians have the very greatest future blessings awaiting, but only (as did Christ) after suffering and death. This death is not a punishment, but rather is the end of our sinning. For Luther, then, God's grace is a greater reality than suffering.

This all-too-cursory treatment of Luther's work helps to pinpoint a few important ideas. Evil comes from human sin, for which God does not punish us. Illness comes from God's wrath, out of love for us, in order to lead us to His grace. Illness is spiritual discipline. While it is certainly an unpleasant circumstance, it is a situation of which the soul can take advantage. Faith in Christ is no guarantee of freedom from sickness, but it does give Christians an assurance that sickness is nothing to fear and that God will preserve us even beyond the end. The suffering of disease is real, and Christians are obliged to minister to it. The sense of Christian healing is gone here, but Luther does offer to the reader a sense of God's presence and concern, and gives him the Christian hope.

John Calvin also had an intense compassion for the sick, and made provision for their care. He gave the job of tending the poor and the sick³² to the deacons; he was very conscious of the social welfare of the people. Deaconesses were provided to minister to the sick. Yet Calvin's outlook on predestination caused many to view their illness as God's will, and as a result some resigned themselves to this will,

while others failed to make any attempt to overcome it.³³

Calvin thus provided for the care of the sick, but lost sight of the original Christian perception into the healing power of God's grace for all who make the response of belief. Calvin's care of the sick was perhaps more grounded on social welfare than it was on the compulsion to witness to God's battle with evil and His victory over it. Even so, care of the sick was a Christian duty.

In Archbishop Thomas Cranmer's first English Prayer Book of 1549, we find some Reformation reflection upon the old Church traditions regarding the sick. Cranmer got the Office for the Visitation of the Sick out of the Sarum Missal, but he made some important changes in it. As Cranmer first organized it, the Office had five parts: (1) A short liturgical introduction. (2) Pastoral preparation for the sacraments of Penance, Unction, and Eucharist which followed. It is interesting to notice that here was included an exhortation on the moral values of sickness, with a great emphasis on the medieval idea of resignation to God's chastisement, and hence there was no hopeful note of recovery. (3) Penance was available if needed; it was recommended but not required. (4) Psalm plus Unction; the Unction involves the notion of remission of sins as well as healing of the body. (5) the Communion of the sick person.³⁴

The first Anglican Prayer Book thus retained a good deal of the medieval theology on disease. Its basic tone was one of resignation, with more of an emphasis on preparation for

death than for a hope of recovery. It was a carryover from the past rather than a refreshing new insight.

In his revision of the Prayer Book a mere three years later in 1552, Cranmer acceded to Protestant criticisms of his 1549 Office. Martin Bucer objected to Cranmer's retention of "Extreme Unction," since it was not a Scriptural sacrament. Consequently, Cranmer dropped the Anointing. This excision removed the whole central focus of the Office, and the exhortations became depressing, since they were not followed by the Sacrament signifying the healing of both soul and body.³⁵ Cranmer had succeeded in removing all aspects of hope from the Office. There is a preponderant emphasis on sin; although our American Prayer Book removed the printed absolution of the English book, confession is suggested in both books--indeed, only on one other occasion in the entire book is confession mentioned.³⁶ Sin is firmly bound up here, because of the need to reconcile ourselves to God before we die. Thus, in 1552 all reference to healing was removed. We shall consider in the next Chapter possible changes in this office.

The Anglican Prayer Book also has always remembered the sick at the Eucharistic sacrifice, in the Prayer for the Whole State of Christ's Church. As in the Early Church, prayers for God's healing of the sick are part of the Eucharist. Cranmer provided that all the sick receive the Sacrament as soon as possible after the celebration in the Church; the Reformers felt that restriction of Communion only to those in extremis

was too much of a limitation. The 1549 book allowed communicating the sick from reserved Sacrament; the 1552 revision removed the reserved Sacrament (for fear of medieval "adoration" of it). But, as Shepherd says, "in both 1549 and 1552 the medieval practice of confining Communion of the sick to those in extremis continued to hold sway, and not the more primitive usage of regular ministration of the Eucharist to all sick persons and shut-ins without reference to any condition of imminent peril."³⁷

The Anglican reformers thus had a hard time shaking off the medieval concepts of disease, and they failed to emphasize God's healing grace. Sin won out. Only now are revisions able to achieve a hopeful outlook on disease. The first Anglican efforts seemed to feel that healing was less important than it was in the early Church. Healing was becoming available by other means than the sacramental. The Church at the Reformation felt more responsible for comforting the suffering of the sick than for curing it. They desired to correct medieval sacramental abuses, but they also weakened one of the strongest Christian witnesses to God's healing grace.

CHAPTER IV

The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

We now turn our attention to the most recent one hundred fifty years of human history. The Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries have been the most exciting period man has ever known, because of the profound and rapid changes which have taken place in his perspective on himself and on the world around him. This time has been marked by the scientific view of life, where men objectively study their environment in order to understand how it works, and how to use nature to improve human life. Since sickness is a miserable human problem, it has been subjected to scientific scrutiny in such large measure that healing has almost completely been taken from the Church by medical science. As a result, the Church has had to re-assess its role in overcoming disease; in this chapter we will observe this situation, and then try to focus on the task of the Church with regard to sickness today.

Even before 1800, man's perspective of life was starting to slip away from dependence on God. Clebsch and Jaekle summarize this period, which they call the "Enlightenment," as the time when western societies found understandings of life that needed no necessary reference to God or religion.¹ Christianity thus began to emphasize the immortality of the soul as its particular area of interest. Pastoral care sought to sustain human souls through the pitfalls and problems of life, and bodily healing in the Church faded markedly. It was

the job of the Christian to encourage the spirit rather than heal the body of one who was sick. The Christians aimed at the joys in the life to come. Puritans, such as John Bunyan, found in the Bible the strength needed to survive spiritually the impediments of this life to achieve bliss in Heaven.²

Progress in science meant that healing arts outside the Church gradually improved, and the Christian view of healing had to undergo a change. The most superstitious attitudes to disease died forever; demon possession ceased to be a cogent interpretation of the cause of strange ailments or behavior, and as a result exorcism fell into abeyance. Physical and psychological cures for illness grew up instead. Pastoral healing fell off with the rise of medicine with its scientific cures, and henceforth Christian healing has been minimal. As science dealt with the body, the pastoral ministry sustained the soul for its destiny outside this life; body and soul became separated.

Yet we would not have scientific progress be seen as an unfortunate encroachment upon the faith and work of the Church. A lament by churchmen upon the progress of science would have to be criticized for being defective in its theology of the Incarnation and also in its Eucharistic theology, where God's redemptive work is seen in all aspects of daily life. God works where He chooses; the Church can act only because He has given it authority to do so. We cannot confine His loving reconciliation to our hands alone.

The Church slowly came to realize that God was working in

the discoveries of modern science, and it began to welcome the advances of medicine. Disease is not from God, and thus the Church has long been fighting it. Medicine was a better weapon than any in the Church's arsenal, since the Church's healings had become very sporadic at best. The Church began to benefit from the discoveries of medical science, and consequently began to work with them. Medicine was a great help in the Church's battle against suffering.

At this time currents within the Church began to recognize that clergy and physicians should be able to work together. Up to this point, medicine had grown up outside the action of the Church, while the Church concentrated on spiritual health and well being. In the Nineteenth century was born a group called Christian Science which was deeply concerned with the lack of Christian healing, but it denied that God could work through science and nature, and as a result it has cut itself off from the mainstream of Christian tradition, so we will not deal with it here. What is important to see is that for several centuries science and Christianity had followed diverging courses, and both tackled the problem of disease--the former by observation and discovery, the latter by strong faith and discipline. During the Nineteenth, and even more in the Twentieth century, these paths began to converge. The medieval Church saw science as of the devil; the modern age realized that the more we know of Creation, the better we can praise God for His myriad wondrous works. This change in view brought profound effects in the Christian

dealing with disease.

One example of a situation where medicine and Christianity combined for new effectiveness in healing can be seen in the Emmanuel Movement. This movement grew up within the Episcopal Church in Boston in the early years of this century under the leadership of Elwood Worcester. This movement was responsible for inspiring the Anglican bishops at Lambeth in 1920 to endorse spiritual healing in the Church. Scherzer explains the theology which motivated this group of clergymen to work closely with physicians for healing.⁴ They were dismayed that the Church had ignored healing as if it were a gift which ended after the apostles had gone. These men felt that Christ still heals today as always, and that he uses various methods to do so, and particularly by means of man's medical knowledge. If a disease needs medicine or surgery, God uses these means to serve His purpose. They were also sure of the therapeutic value of one's relationship to God in Christ. The Christian love is the greatest healing agent in the world.

Here we find a group within the catholic Church which was concerned with healing and which teamed up with physicians in order to do so. The Emmanuel movement may be called a "pioneer healing effort among the larger Christian churches."⁵ It made the affirmation that God heals through medicine, and that both medicine and the Church were fighting evil and suffering. Besides working closely with physicians, these men also healed directly by God's grace. Christianity had not abandoned the sick.

Christianity was no longer the only healer available to man. Its attitude of hope towards the abolition of disease was joined by the newer hope of medical cure. Medicine, for its part, came to realize that Christianity is of great importance to the healing of the whole man. Psychosomatic medicine showed that the spiritual ministration during sickness is fundamental to cure, and saw that the view of the New Testament and the early Church is perfectly sound scientifically as well as theologically.⁶ Christianity is unique in its confident faith in God's power to heal, a hope greater even than the empirical certainties of science. Medicine may heal the body, but the Church is concerned also with the healing of the spirit, of the non-physical aspects of personality. Medicine realized that the soul must be in harmony with the body and with God.

For its part, the Church has sought to restore its healing ministry to its original place of importance in the Church's work. Biblical study has shown the absolute imperative of healing disease both for Christ and for the early Church, as part of God's victory over evil. We must witness to the fact that God is still in charge of the situation, and that no disease can ravage a person when God wills otherwise. The Anglican Communion has gradually sought to heed Christ's command and restore the healing ministry--not as a substitute for medicine, but in cooperation with it.⁷ While disease is not caused by our sin, our being cut off from God makes His healing difficult and the Church's absolution of our sins enables us to be more open to God's healing love.

The growth of scientific observation of the world had a marked effect on the Church's idea of the relationship of body and soul. We have seen in the previous chapter the gradual increase of Christian focus on the soul and a decrease of concern for responsibility for the body. This trend went on into the Nineteenth century. In Ichabod Spencer we find an example of how some Christians a century ago were careful to separate body and soul. He dealt with healing the soul, whose relationships to the body were merely extrinsic.⁸ He felt that physical problems were entirely separate from the soul; Christian responsibility was only for the latter. Christian Science is also of this extreme point of view; matter does not exist, and mind is the only reality. Oneness with God denies the existence of sickness and pain.⁹ Christians are concerned only with the soul.

At the turn of this century, physicians and the Church were agreed that physical health and spiritual help were separate. The physician cared for the body, while the clergy cared for the soul. Health could be treated apart from one's relationship with God. It is the contention of this present writer, however, that such Christian disengagement from the physical suffering of disease is not consonant with the Christian tradition; we will see how the last fifty years have led to a re-affirmation of Christian concern with physical health as part of its Gospel of reconciliation of the whole man to God. We will try to discover why Hiltner can say: "We must deny that what our faith is concerned to heal is the soul."

We seek to heal man's spirit, his total personality, his sinful self."¹⁰ As Christians we cannot be satisfied with less than the whole man.

Within the last century and a half, the Church has brightened some of the theological insights which we saw developing earlier, and it saw clearly its task to heal disease. Biblical criticism was one result of the scientific method of study, and by this means the attitude of Christ to disease became clearer. The Church began to throw off medieval superstition and squarely to face the problems of disease and suffering.

Christians cannot escape from a pastoral concern for troubled members of their flock, and indeed for all men. Our Summary of the Law points out this fact. Also, the Incarnation itself has pastoral implications. The clergyman goes to the sickroom as the representative of Christ, who hungered and suffered: and knows himself the mental and spiritual anguish of a sick man.¹¹ Christ enters into human sickness, and compels us (as his Body) to be there. Christ reconciles the loneliness and fear of the sick to God. He understands our pain.

The Holy Spirit also impells the Church's care of the sick. Pastoral care has been seen as the Holy Spirit working within the life of the Church.¹² The Church is God's source of strength for those who need help. The Church is the Holy People of God who minister to the sick and dying to have them know that they do not go on alone in time of trouble.¹³ The Holy Spirit (i.e., God's presence) inspires healings as He

inspires the Word and Sacraments.

Within the last century or so, the Church has clearly reaffirmed what it means to be the Church. The Oxford Movement in the Church of England pointed out that the Church acts at God's command and at none other. At the middle of the Nineteenth Century we find priests with this firm view that the Church is sustained by God through the Holy Spirit to be His means of reconciliation in the world; they are involved in the suffering around them. Charles Lowder was in Wapping in London's poor East End when a cholera epidemic hit the area. Surely it was this priest's loyalty to the catholic Christian traditions which led him to say the following:¹⁴

The patients were no sooner brought in than they were at once attended to, their beds prepared, and all that loving ministry could do was certainly done for them. It was sad to see how little even this could avail for their recovery; medical remedies, the most assiduous nursing and care, were all baffled by the virulency of the disease. Still the Sister's love and perseverance never failed....(the Sister) was often tempted in the silence to cry over the sad scene which lay before her, yet bravely and nobly she bore up, and never left her post as long as her presence was needed.

There was something very touching, too, in the early morning Communion at St. Peter's--when we all felt our great need of Divine help, the clergy for their spiritual work, the Sisters for their bodily and yet also spiritual ministries. ...the Communion which was knitting us together in the bundle of life was joining us closely to Him Whom we could thus recognize as walking with us in the midst of this fiery furnace, so that not even the smell of fire passed on us, not one among ourselves was touched by the power of the plague.

Here we get a flavor of catholic Anglicanism's attitude to disease exactly a century ago (1866). Compassionate love (of

quite a different sort from medicine) cares about each person who is sick. Christ compells healing--through both medicine and sacrament. Doctors and clergy work side by side. The physical and spiritual ministries are partners.

We see that medicine did not displace Christianity in dealing with disease, nor did it encroach upon Christian territory. Medicine could not do everything which is needed to heal the whole person. Cabot and Dicks were among the first clearly to express the relationship between the clergyman and the physician. They say that doctors try to alleviate bodily suffering, but often tend to do less for mental and emotional suffering which comes with maladies.¹⁵ Increasing medical specialization leaves out personal concern; the pastor thus must counteract this tendency by focusing on the whole patient and his ground of being in God.¹⁶ The pastor supremely is concerned with the person who is sick; illness is a time of crisis for the patient, and interest at a crucial time can give the afflicted a great spiritual experience of hope, and thus the pastor may rebuild a sufferer's life.¹⁷

Medicine has come to discover that it cannot do the job alone. One's spiritual state of mind affects his physical health. If medicine does little for the mind of a patient, it harms the healing of his tissues. At times, fears may grow up in him which the doctor, due to his scientific training, does not share.¹⁸ The clergyman above all represents hope and love in a way that no scientist can. The Gospel of God's love by its nature also impells the Christian clergyman to help the

sufferer know that he is not alone in his suffering. The minister tries to show the afflicted that God cares for him, suffers in his suffering, understands it, and plans for him in sickness as in health.¹⁹ God's love is the greatest hope, confidence, and joy of all; He does not send disease.

We now turn our attention to see how the traditional methods of hope and healing used by the Church were affected by the scientific approach to disease. We will find that where any change has occurred in the customary ministrations, it has tended to be a simplifying and stripping of medieval superstitions from the practice involved.

In the Roman Church, Unction has continued to follow the Tridentine formula. It has lost its healing qualities, and is now reserved only for use in extremis as a final absolution before death. The sacrament remits sins, and thus still cleanses us from evil, but in a much different way than in the primitive Church. It is meant particularly for sins committed through the senses, and is applied to the eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, hands, and feet.²⁰ Unction, then, still pertains to sin, as it has since before the Reformation; it is no longer a sacramental agent of God's healing love. Its use in healing is dampened because of its association with death. It is not a sign of hope, although it does indicate God's forgiveness of our sins.

The Anglican Communion has realized the pressing need to revise its Office for Visitation of the Sick, which is old-fashioned and overladen with the attitude that sin causes disease. The Liturgical Commission of the Episcopal Church

shows the Church's re-thinking of its attitude toward disease by suggesting the following pattern for revision of that Office.²¹ First, we recall that the early Church used a sevenfold order of ministrations to give a continuous and cumulative effect; the medieval idea was to do everything for purification of the soul in one single office of great length and weight. We find short and frequent Offices better than one long one. Second, for over fifty years, some parishes have used public healing services in Church, with corporate intercessions for the sick, present or absent. This practice, too, recalls the early Church. Third, the 1928 revision of the Prayer Book provided five sets of antiphon - psalm - collect, but they are inadequate in content. We need a better selection and arrangement of themes, with a strong affirmative lesson from Scripture,²² as a nucleus for any single ministration. Fourth, the Commission advocates (as we do here) that Unction be revived as a healing sacrament to be used in our normal ministration to the sick. They notice that Christian experience has shown that Unction gives spiritual help and therefore also physical betterment; it is not Extreme Unction for death only. We must make it familiar in healing by public use in Church, and to use it as the conclusion of the revised Office. The Church wishes to restore its sacramental sign of God's healing love.

It is also interesting to see why the Liturgical Commission feels that these changes must be made in the Office for Visitation of the Sick. The principal reason is the advance

made in medicine.²³ Physicians now are quite confident of victory over most cases of disease, and do not welcome the Church's ministrations if causing resignation to death. Doctors realize the need for ministrations which are constructive and focus on the hope of recovery. Our Visitation Office is notably lacking in hope, and thus is true to neither medicine nor Scripture. Hope is the traditional Christian attitude to disease--a hope transcending even death, and thus a greater hope than that of medicine.

Another Christian ministration to disease has been its medical missions. They still go on unabated, assisted by modern medical knowledge. The Roman Catholic Church has medical missions in many lands, but medical aid is used only to awaken people to God's love and not as an end in itself.²⁴ Nursing orders of nuns work in missions abroad and also here at home. The Church does use medical science to show God's love. Protestant missionaries, claims Scherzer, were not originally medically trained, but they learned medicine out of compassion.²⁵ They save lives in order to save souls. Hospital training is part of the seminary course, as Clinical Pastoral Training helps future clergy use medical and psychological insights in their ministries. The more we know about helping people due to love for them, the more we serve God's purpose.

One other Christian ministration to disease seems to go unheralded these days. In the Eucharist, we still intercede for the sick and suffering, as Christians have always done.

The sick are a definite part of our intercessions for the Whole State of Christ's Church, when we ask God's comfort upon them. These prayers ought to be more emphasized in the life of the Church, along with the Eucharistic certainty of God's grace.

The Church has come to reflect modern insights into illness in its theology of the nature of disease. Medicine and science have helped the Church better to understand and to deal with the suffering involved in illness. The Church's function is more profound than empirical physical healing.

Seward Hiltner has devoted much time and thought to the Christian pastoral involvement in disease. He distinguishes between the words "illness" and "disease;" "illness" refers to the whole organism's experience, including spiritual suffering, while "disease" is the chemical and physiological processes of impairment.²⁶ "Illness" thus involves the physical impairment with the subjective experience of impairment; there is a subjective aspect to being sick, and it must be dealt with if we are to heal; here is where spiritual healing comes in.

Healing gets rid of impairment. It means becoming whole-- a restoration of a condition once obtaining but then lost.²⁷ Wholeness is restored in the functioning of the whole person-- body and spirit. Healing may even give a wholeness never before present in the person, as we see in Jesus' healing of the man blind from birth (John 9). It is not the normal process of growth and development. Hiltner summarizes healing as the "restoration of functional wholeness that has been

impaired as to direction and/or schedule."²⁸ Integrity and harmony are restored by the healing process.

Hiltner then considers illness itself, and discovers that there are four different kinds of causes which must be dealt with. We cannot consider all impairment to be exactly the same. Hiltner lists the four causes of impairment:²⁹ The defect is where something is missing, such as the idiot's lack of intelligence or a man with no arms. Invasion is where bacteria or viruses or poison intrude to upset our normal state. Distortion occurs when one eats too many calories or too few vitamins, or perhaps when one is a chronic alcoholic. Forced emotional deviations are considered decision, such as would be the case with delinquency. Illness is more than the purely physical; it is a condition which because of its abnormality cuts us off from our fellows, and is a time when we easily may cut ourselves off from God. Emotional factors are just as important as the physical, and in the case of distortion and decision, are more important.

This consideration leads us to ponder whether illness is caused by our sin. We immediately and emphatically deny that God sends sickness to us for any reason, be it punishment or discipline; the Gospel clearly shows that God does not cause illness. The Church even now still is burdened by the medieval view that sickness is God's will for us,³⁰ and many Christians blame God when they get sick. We fight sickness as we fight sin, and focus on the hope coming from God's love. Yet Hiltner shows that we are more responsible for much of disease

than we are inclined to think, since sometimes a "decision is wrongly or perversely made."³¹ We cannot pass the buck for all our suffering. Our own selfishness may be involved in our illness, and we have to ask God's forgiveness for it. Confession does have a place in healing.

Yet the principal focus of the modern Church is upon the joy and confidence of the Gospel. Recent scholarship has sharply clarified the nature of the original revelation in Christ, and the hope by which the early Christians were inspired. It has become unquestionably clear that the Gospel is good news, and not bad. Those who in their impairment recognize their need for God's healing love, and offer themselves up to Him, can be sure that in some fashion healing is already in progress.³² The Christian may always be confident of God's healing love, although he may not find that that love heals him in the manner which he might expect. There is nothing in life that can extinguish the glow of hope from the Gospel; God is overcoming evil.

The Church has now lost its medieval situation where it was the best and largest available source for healing. Its medieval complacency towards healing disease has been displaced by a compassionate search for those who suffer; they do not have to come to us. It is the Christian vocation to go and seek out evil, and to partake of Christ's victory over it. In 1829, Daniel Wilson reminded pastors that they were to seek out the ill and infirm.³³ Christians go out to those who are in need; ministering to the sick comes from love of our fellow

man. While the Church is no longer the principal source of healing, it is the agent for expressing God's love in the world--the love and hope of which a sick person is in particular need. The Church has devised new methods of performing its unique role in the fight against illness, and in our last chapter we shall summarize the contemporary scene.

We have seen marked developments taking place within the last century and a half. At first, medical science diverged from the Church, and the Church pursued the state of the soul, abandoning the body to the physicians. Yet occasional Christians realized that a basic element of Christianity had become lost, and they broke off from the Christian mainstream (e.g., Christian Scientists). The Church, however, with the rise of modern Biblical study, came to recognize the original Christian unity of body and soul, and that God works through Nature and most particularly medicine. Medicine realized that it could not carry the ball alone. Consequently, the Church and medicine have worked ever more closely together, since both aim for the same goal of elimination of disease.

CHAPTER V

Modern Insights

We will now assess the present Christian position with regard to illness. In this pursuit it will become clear that modern Christianity is primarily concerned with the growth of the whole of the sick person. Since sickness is a time of crisis, the afflicted person is confronted with the necessity to re-appraise his life, and his relationship to God. Sickness is a time when a person can grow closer to God if he realizes his dependence upon God's love.

There is a strong consensus that the goal of the pastor's ministration to the sick is the growth of souls. Such growth is very individual and personal, and no two persons grow in quite the same way. "Spiritual life means the growth of the soul along the path of its individual nature."¹ Yet this progress is inspired by penetrating into men's lives by sympathy and the sharing of hardship, when we will find it possible to return good for evil. A spiritual relationship between two persons which enables one to share the suffering of the other almost always brings growth and the joy of fellowship.

Cabot and Dicks point out that illness can be made a growing experience rather than mere suffering. As medicine cares for the body, Christians strive to heal the whole person suffering from the disease. Every person must do his own growing, but we can help by providing an atmosphere which

favors growth.² There are five ways to foster growth. (1) Whenever one sincerely loves another, both persons grow by reaching up and out.³ (2) We may inspire learning and thus spark new interests, or (3) we may help one to appreciate beauty in life. (4) When someone sees that he is of service to another, he realizes that his person has value to others. (5) Suffering nourishes growth, although it does so differently for each person. When suffering does not have to be borne alone, it teaches fellowship. "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." This view that a person can emerge from sickness having grown in the process reflects the early Christian assertion of victory over evil. Evil does not have the power to destroy us, to remove us from God's love.

While Christianity has for the most part given up to medicine the physical care of the sick, it nevertheless has a primary position in the fight against disease. Christian institutions are no longer the only resource for healing available to the sick. Yet even physicians and other scientists agree that the clergy are indispensable. It is the minister's duty to rouse the great energies, certainties, and faiths of Christianity.⁴ The Christian hope is even greater than that of medicine. Christianity is concerned with all of men's interests in relation to the eternal, including healing.⁵ The pastor cares more for enrichment than merely for preservation of life; while the Christian hope often involves healing, it is greater even than life itself. We are apart from the fragmenting tendency of modern specialized medicine.

Modern Christian ministry to the sick focuses particularly upon the individual person who is afflicted. In order better to bring the good news of the Gospel to those who suffer, the Church is becoming concerned with the nature of each person and problem, and is more interested in goals than in methods. For this reason, Christian ministry to disease is more interested in the person than in sacramental methodology. Medicine does the bodily healing; Christianity inspires personal growth.

The Church seeks to discover how each particular person grows. A person can assimilate spiritual food only when it feeds his "growing edge."⁶ A soul can advance only from where it now is. Every person has a "growing edge" when he enters upon the experience called illness; the minister's task is to find and cultivate that area for growth. We have to know the person involved. Human anatomy is uniform, but personalities are never the same. The minister has to vary his approach depending on the character, age, and condition of the person with whom he deals.⁷

In order to help one who suffers, we have to know the person who is suffering. This personal concern in Christian healing is becoming ever more strongly endorsed by the Church. An indication of this trend is found in the increase in the number of theological students taking Clinical Pastoral Training. Human personality is part of theological education; academic disciplines do not have all the answers. Growth comes from contact with persons, where one can enter deeply

into the problems of another and feel the depth of his distress.⁸ This sharing has redemptive qualities for both persons. If we are to know the person himself, and his spirit burdened by the disease, we have to listen. While we realize keenly our task to proclaim the joy of the Gospel, we cannot come to know the other when we do all the talking. We listen. Only thus can the afflicted bring us his burden of doubts and fears so that we can help him bear it.

Listening is one of Christianity's most valuable functions in treating disease today. It is necessary for spiritual and personal growth that two souls meet. In such a way can a soul gather strength to withstand the ravages of the illness, for here is shared the love that the sick person painfully needs, as well as the inner peace that can come only through companionship. In our personal relationship with the sick we are sure that God is working to strengthen and to heal.

When we as Christians come to know persons who are ill, we will find that their spiritual problems due to their suffering may be one of several kinds. Certain specific spiritual problems may be present in any case of disease. Each one of these problems is addressed in a particular way by the Christian Gospel.

One spiritual problem which is provoked by one's helplessness when he is ill is the feeling of loneliness. Loneliness is a problem to most people who are ill.⁹ The sick person is lonely because others (particularly his loved ones) come and go without him; he is left out of the hustle and bustle of life.

A person about to go to the operating room feels all alone and helpless in an alien world; an operation is an experience which he must endure alone, since no one else can actually go through it with him. Patients feel lonely as they anticipate such an experience. Convalescence may also foster feelings of loneliness as the attention which one had been getting falls off. Sickness is a time of quiet, which departure from the normal routine gives occasion to focus on loneliness. The clergyman can understand this loneliness, and in his sympathy can help share in it; by his presence and concern, he may bolster the sick person to see that God's love is always present too. The Gospel is good news of our fellowship with God and others, wherever we may be.

A related problem which grips the spirit of a sick person is fear. Fear comes because we are helpless against the onslaught of disease.¹⁰ Patients fear an operation, since it is a dangerous undertaking. They fear death, and also the unknown future. The Christian task here is clear, since confidence in God's love removes fear. Whatever happens, we may be sure that God's love will not abandon us to the powers of evil. Fears are not present when we have confidence in God. God's love is the most certain thing of all, and we need not be afraid of the future, whatever it may be. Not even death can cut us off from the greatest love of all. The Christian must come and share his confidence with the fearful sick person. Often prayers will bring the person closer to God's love.

Another spiritual difficulty which may plague a sick

person is bitterness. He resents his sickness, with its pain and inconvenience.¹¹ He may even curse God for causing his sickness, since popular piety still sees illness as punishment from God. Bitterness is hard to relieve even if the cause provoking it be removed, because it is easy to blame someone for our troubles. Often there is little that the pastor can do about bitterness; yet we hope that our devotion to the one who suffers will lead him to see that his bitterness hurts both himself and others who care for him. Such a patient must see that we stand by him even when he curses someone dear to us (especially God), for he will become bitter towards us (and God) if we oppose him. Love here loves him even when he is unloveable. We accept him as he is. The Gospel is important in its ministry to bitterness.

Patients often have to struggle with a sense of guilt. A period of helplessness and suffering brings reflection and may humble a strong pride.¹² People may get a guilty conscience as they think back upon their involvement in life and their dealings with others. Often the bitterness which we alluded to above comes from a profound guilt. Loving forgiveness is the Christian attitude here; compassion, understanding, and faith can foster a good deal of spiritual growth. We have to persuade the guilt-ridden man that someone sincerely cares for him; this concern may help him to see that others also may forgive him. Christians know that no man is without sin, and that God graciously extends His forgiveness to all. This hope is needed by a person feeling guilty because he must

make impositions on others while he is sick.

A sick person also suffers acutely from boredom. When we are sick, we are generally bored because we have nothing to do; we feel useless.¹³ Occupation is the best relief for boredom, as is also a change of scene. The Christian ministry is also clear in this situation, since people must have some joy in existence or they will have no desire to go on living. The Gospel reflects a joy in even the simple things of life, and finds in them the working of God. When dullness threatens to dismay us, we need to find something to be glad of in our present experience. We need to see the people we love, and also to see ourselves, as servants of the great love of God. Love enables us to affirm life; without it, the light of life goes out. Christianity gives "zest and permanence to our affections and through them to our daily experiences."¹⁴

Such are the spiritual problems created by illness. Christianity can minister to these needs as can no other aspect of life. The early Church proclaimed that God has acted in Christ to deal with our suffering from evil. Modern Christians are still confident that God is our ultimate hope; God's love is of greater significance than any of our problems. Perhaps one change of focus since the Gospel times may be found here, since it often seems that God's love is Something for which we have to look, rather than as Something (or Someone) which comes to us. God acts in the universe. Yet the basic affirmation is unchanged, since God has the power to heal us and make us whole. While physical healing comes mostly from medicine,

Christianity is still the greatest source of hope; so shall it remain.

Doctors and clergy agree that Christianity is a great source of courage for the sick. Indeed, we may presume to say that there is no greater courage and hope anywhere else; medicine certainly does not operate from the base of an over-arching love. The clergyman often serves as the giver of courage to the sick person and his family.¹⁵ The patient is often very worried about his family, and it comforts him to see that they are in good hands; we remember that being in the hands of the clergy means that one is in God's hands. The minister helps the doctor greatly just by standing by, for the clergy represent the presence of God's love. Sick persons and their families need courage in the face of adversity; because of the certainty of God's love, we have courage and hope to give.

We have sought to discover which aspects of sickness are best served by Christianity today. People who are despondent, perplexed, or unhappy are well served by the minister.¹⁶ We may be quite certain that one or another of these conditions applies whenever a person is sick. Christianity has always had a Gospel of hope for the suffering and disappointed folk in this world: God has overcome the power of evil which severs us from Himself. God's love has the power to heal. Those whose spirits are despondent may be strengthened by the grace of God, which can and does heal.

One modern Christian pastor assesses the situation as

follows:

(The minister) ought to be an expert in the function of religion in the cure of souls. He ought to know what resources are available in religion to aid men and women to effect that adjustment which is necessary when consciences are troubled, when they feel themselves overwhelmed by circumstances or temptations, when life seems to have no purpose and value, when their world has gone wrong.¹⁷

The purpose of this study has been to see what Christianity does in the cure of souls when disease strikes.

We have seen modern Christian thinking regarding disease. We cannot even now give any glib or easy answers, since illness is a problem too profound to be idly dismissed. Most of God's healing work against disease is now done by medicine, a powerful weapon in God's arsenal against evil. Yet in spite of all the pain and suffering of illness, we have the great love of God--a love which transcends even pain. This love often heals; yet when it does not, we face the future confident and hopeful because of the loving fellowship of God. As Christians, then, what we do in the face of disease we do sustained and inspired by Almighty God.

Epilogue

This author wishes to take this opportunity at the completion of our study to make his own observations regarding the modern Christian attitude towards suffering in disease. These conclusions are the author's own, and others may think differently.

It seems that modern Christian pastoral care of the sick is done by a love of persons with concern for their sufferings. Rather than preaching theological affirmations (in time of crisis these seem empty anyway), Christians focus on the growing power of love in every situation. We love the whole man; physical illness is just part of the problem. Medicine takes good care of the affliction itself; we are concerned with what illness does to the person. Science and religion work together.

Christ is seen mostly as a comforter and as one who shares in suffering with us; Christians have generally lost sight of his victory over evil, which still seems to rage unchecked in the world. We need to re-affirm that God's love is greater than evil; He does help us when we are sick, although we cannot presume to tell Him what to do. Love does not always do as we choose. We entrust ourselves to God's great love, not resign ourselves to Fate.

The Gospel is aimed at the individual needs and concerns of each person. Our concern is with the person himself, so that any method discovered by science to help the person serves

also our concern. Religion is introverted and selfish if it uses only "religious" methods. God works everywhere.

We try to meet the person and help him to grow. Love is the greatest power of all for growth. Our problem now is to discern how we may best meet each person, since each is different. We can count on God to lead us as we endeavor to help each person grow. Listening sensitively is the best way to start.

We must address ourselves to the question of whether we have lost some of our power against disease by ceasing to proclaim God's unrestricted victory over evil and suffering. This present author believes that we have, and that our ministry of the Word must point out the nature of God's victory over illness.

The pastor confronts illness armed with God's omnipotent love; nothing can destroy that love, as Paul reminds us in Romans 8:38-39. This love requires the pastoral care of those who are sick. Over the years, Christians have focused more and more upon the person who is sick. To help this person grow in his dependence and reliance on the love of God is the most wonderful thing in the world. Not only does God not send us sickness, but His love transforms it into an occasion of victory, of union with Him. To this insight only Christians can attest, and they must do so by the grace of God. Yet this view is seen less by preaching than it is by personal experience of that love. In our love of the sick person comes the path to the love of God.

Footnotes to Chapter One

1. R. K. Harrison, "Disease," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, I, (Nashville, 1962), p. 848.

2. We find this explicitly said in the New Testament in John 9:2, where the Pharisees say that a man was born blind due to someone's sin; we also notice how Jesus denies this cause of his blindness.

3. Harrison, p. 848.

4. Evelyn Frost, Christian Healing, (London, 1954), p. 23.

5. Alan Richardson, Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament, (New York, 1958), p. 99.

6. Ibid., p. 98.

7. Romans 8:21. Suffering is real, but our hope is greater.

8. I Corinthians 15:24-25.

9. O.A. Piper, "Sin and Evil," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, IV, p. 453.

10. Frost, p. 57.

11. Millar Burrows, An Outline of Biblical Theology, (Philadelphia, 1946), p. 71.

12. Leslie Weatherhead, Psychology, Religion, and Healing, (Nashville, 1951), p. 39.

13. Paul S. Minear, Eyes of Faith, (Philadelphia, 1946), p. 264.

14. Piper, p. 453.

15. Ibid., p. 451 for the insight of the whole paragraph.

16. Pain is love's confrontation with evil in our world.

17. Burrows, p. 288.

18. Piper, p. 453.

19. Richardson, p. 251.

20. Standing Liturgical Commission of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U. S. A., Prayer Book Studies III: The Order for the Ministration to the Sick, (New York, 1951), p. 4.

21. This fact is worth remembering when someone goes through intense suffering and asks, "Why did God do this to me?" God comforts and cures rather than inflicts.

22. Prayer Book Studies III, p. 5.
23. Ibid., p. 4.
24. Quoted in Weatherhead, p. 36.
25. Harrison, p. 848. His evidence here seems somewhat flimsy and eisegetical, so we do not consider it here; his conclusion, however, seems interesting and I give it to provoke further thought by the reader.
26. Frost, p. 20.
27. We must not misunderstand St. Paul here. He attacks our flesh (which means human nature) not as evil but as weak. It is vulnerable to attack by evil, and as such is dependent on God's grace for rescue. Flesh is not evil; its weakness means that we need God's help.

Footnotes to Chapter Two

1. Leslie Weatherhead, Psychology, Religion, and Healing, p. 78.
2. Ibid., p. 78 for all the following in this paragraph.
3. O.A. Piper, "Suffering and Evil," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, IV, p. 452.
4. Evelyn Frost, Christian Healing, p. 199.
5. Ibid., p. 51.
6. Ibid., p. 25.
7. These references all from Frost, pp. 72-74.
8. William A. Clebsch and Charles R. Jaekle, Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective, (Englewood Cliffs, 1964), pp. 15-16.
9. Millar Burrows, Outline of Biblical Theology, p. 71.
10. Clebsch and Jaekle, p. 15.
11. Ibid., p. 17.
12. Prayer Book Studies III: The Order for the Ministration to the Sick, p. 6.
13. George G. Dawson, Healing: Pagan and Christian, (London, 1935), p. 146.
14. Ibid., p. 46 for this six-point system.

15. Notice the remarkable contrast between this realistic view and that of modern Christian Science, where disease is more imaginary than real.

16. Prayer Book Studies III, p. 6.

17. Dawson, p. 149.

18. Weatherhead, p. 78.

19. Dawson, p. 147.

20. Ibid., p. 148.

21. Ibid., p. 157.

22. Ibid., pp. 156-158 for all the facts in this paragraph.

23. Frost, p. 70.

24. In Frost, pp. 82-83.

25. Ibid., p. 83.

26. Ibid., pp. 41-42.

27. Ibid., p. 40.

28. In Ibid., p. 45.

29. Dom Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy, (London, 1945), p. 193.

30. Frost, p. 46.

31. Dawson, p. 152.

32. Ibid., p. 151.

33. Ibid., p. 151.

34. Weatherhead, p. 84.

35. Ibid., p. 83.

36. Dawson, pp. 155-156 for the whole paragraph.

37. Adolf von Harnack, The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries, (New York, 1904), pp. 160-161.

38. Frost, P. 60.

39. Harnack, pp. 152-165.

40. In Harnack, pp. 163-164, from pseudo-Clementine epistle De Virginitate.

41. Frost, p. 59.

42. Frost, p. 49.
43. Ibid., p. 28.
44. Ibid., p. 29.
45. On the Flesh of Christ, quoted in Frost, p. 37.
46. Weatherhead, pp. 79-82.
47. Frost, pp. 68-69.

Footnotes to Chapter Three

1. Clebsch and Jaekle, Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective, p. 20.
2. Ibid., p. 21.
3. Ibid., p. 20.
4. Ibid., p. 21.
5. Ibid., p. 21.
6. Ibid., p. 22.
7. Ibid., p. 24.
8. Carl Scherzer, The Church and Healing, (Philadelphia, 1950), p. 51.
9. Ibid., p. 52.
10. Prayer Book Studies III, p. 7.
11. Scherzer, p. 85.
12. George Dawson, Healing; Pagan and Christian, p. 153.
13. Clebsch and Jaekle, p. 25.
14. Ibid., p. 25
15. Ibid., p. 25.
16. John T. McNeill, A History of the Cure of Souls, (New York, 1951), p. 119.
17. Ibid., pp. 129-130.
18. Ibid., pp. 157-158.
19. Ibid., p. 158.

20. McNeill, p. 159.
21. Scherzer, pp. 56-57.
22. Dawson, p. 158.
23. Clebsch and Jaekle, p. 26.
24. Scherzer, p. 84.
25. Ibid., p. 83.
26. Ibid., p. 82.
27. Ibid., pp. 67-68.
28. Ibid., p. 69.
29. Ibid., p. 68.
30. Clebsch and Jaekle, p. 210.
31. Ibid., pp. 210-223.
32. It is interesting to notice that Calvin lumps poverty and sickness together. One is an economic misfortune due to human society, and the other is a personal physical lack of well-being. Both are situations requiring compassion, concern, and care.
33. Scherzer, pp. 70-72.
34. This paragraph is based on Prayer Book Studies III, pp. 9-10.
35. Ibid., pp. 10-11.
36. On page 88 in the American Prayer Book. See also in the Prayer Books of the Church of England, p. 298 of 1662 and p. 378 in the proposed 1928 Revised Book.
37. Massey H. Shepherd, The Oxford American Prayer Book Commentary. (New York, 1950), p. 321.

Footnotes to Chapter Four

1. Clebsch and Jaekle, Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective, p. 28.
2. Ibid., p. 29.
3. Ibid., p. 29.
4. Scherzer, The Church and Healing, p. 171.
5. Walter W. Dwyer, The Churches' Handbook for Spiritual Healing, (New York, 1965), p. 4.

6. Prayer Book Studies III, p. 14.
7. Ibid., pp. 14-15.
8. Seward Hiltner, Preface to Pastoral Theology, (Nashville, 1958), p. 99.
9. Scherzer, pp. 156-157.
10. Hiltner, p. 99.
11. Richard C. Cabot and Russell L. Dicks, The Art of Ministering to the Sick, (New York, 1936), p. 13.
12. Charles Duell Kean, Christian Faith and Pastoral Care, (Greenwich, 1961), p. 11.
13. Ibid., p. 14.
14. Charles Lowder, (anonymously by Maria Trench), (New York, 1883), pp. 220 ff.
15. Cabot and Dicks, p. 6. This statement may have been always true thirty years ago, but now doctors are so well aware of the emotional implications of disease that they cannot ignore this area.
16. Ibid., p. 9.
17. Ibid., pp. 10-11.
18. Ibid., p. 6.
19. Ibid., p. 22.
20. Dawson, Healing: Pagan and Christian, p. 152.
21. Prayer Book Studies III, pp. 13-14.
22. Such, we remember, is the New Testament's basic attitude to disease. Hope is sure.
23. Prayer Book Studies III, pp. 11-12.
24. Scherzer, p. 187.
25. Ibid., pp. 190-191.
26. Hiltner, p. 91.
27. Ibid., p. 89.
28. Ibid., p. 90.
29. Ibid., p. 92.

30. See the hymns in our Hymnal 1940 under "Visitation." Some are "directly contrary" to Christ's teaching. Prayer Book Studies III, p. 17.

31. Hiltner, p. 95.

32. Ibid., p. 98.

33. Charles F. Kemp, Physicians of the Soul, (New York, 1937), p. 93.

Footnotes to Chapter Five

1. Cabot and Dicks, The Art of Ministering to the Sick, p. 18.

2. Ibid., pp. 16-18 for the insight of this whole paragraph.

3. I wish to say "Amen" to this statement as strongly as possible. It often takes a crisis for us to realize how much we grow by love for others, but it becomes very clear at such a time. Love is the best growth-agent in Creation.

4. Cabot and Dicks, pp. 4-5.

5. Ibid., p. 3.

6. Ibid., pp. 14-15.

7. Kemp, Physicians of the Soul, p. 92. Kemp shows that this personal approach has been used by Christians for over three centuries, and was expressed by Richard Baxter in 1656. It is not an innovation.

8. Ibid., p. 251.

9. Cabot and Dicks, pp. 57-68.

10. Ibid., pp. 69-75.

11. Ibid., p. 75-77.

12. Ibid., pp. 77-80.

13. Ibid., pp. 82-85.

14. Ibid., p. 86.

15. Kemp, p. 237.

16. Ibid., p. 241.

17. Kemp, p. 242, quoting Charles T. Holman in The Cure of Souls, (Chicago, no date given), p. 219.

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Westminster Press, 1950.

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Book Commentary. New York: Oxford University Press, 1950.

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for the Ministration to the Sick. New York: Church Pension
Fund, 1951.

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Dutton, 1883.

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Nashville: Abingdon Cokesbury, 1951.